



JOHN FLAXMAN



MARY ANN FLAXMAN, c. 1772.

*Wax Medallion.*

(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

*By permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

[*Frontispiece.*

# JOHN FLAXMAN

1755-1826

BY

W. G. CONSTABLE

OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY

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TO  
MY WIFE  
AND  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
HAVARD THOMAS



THOMAS BENTLEY.

*Biscuit Medallion.*

(Victoria and Albert Museum.)

*By permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

## PREFACE

THIS book has its origin in a lecture delivered at University College, London, on the centenary of John Flaxman's death, and is in the main an expansion of that lecture. Its excuse is the lack of any reasonably comprehensive account of Flaxman's work, and of his place in the history of English art. Fairly adequate biographies exist, however, notably the article by Sir Sidney Colvin in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; and I have therefore refrained from introducing biographical detail except where it has a direct bearing on Flaxman's development and activity as an artist. Of gaps and omissions in my own work I am only too conscious; but I hope at least to have provided a starting point for students with greater leisure and opportunities than myself.

To acknowledge all the debts incurred in preparing this book would be impossible here. But I am especially grateful to Sir Gregory Foster, Provost of University College, for his kindness and help, notably in the matter of publication; to Mr. John Wilke, Librarian of the College, for much help in obtaining photographs; to Messrs. Josiah Wedgwood and Sons for allowing me to

## PREFACE

consult the valuable material in the Etruria Museum, and for the gift of photographs; to Mr. John Cook, curator of the Etruria Museum, for his ready help in my work there, and for many illuminating suggestions; to the Deans, Rectors, Vicars, and Vergers of cathedrals and churches throughout England, for their kindness in helping me to obtain photographs and in supplying information concerning monuments; and to my colleagues in the British and Victoria and Albert Museums for their ready assistance whenever called upon. Also, I have to thank those who have kindly given me permission to reproduce photographs.

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W. G. C.

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THE DANCING HOURS.

*Plaque in Jasper Ware.*

*(Etruria Museum.)*

*By permission of Messrs. Josiah Wedgwood & Sons.*

# JOHN FLAXMAN

## CHAPTER I: *Early Years, 1755-1775*

JOHN FLAXMAN was born on July 6, 1755, in York, during a temporary stay of his parents there. His father was a maker of casts and models of some reputation. Gilchrist,<sup>1</sup> writing in 1863, speaks of a "wistful remembrance of the superiority of 'old Flaxman's' casts" still surviving among artists. John was his second son, a puny, ailing little boy. A short period at school under a master of the Squeers type was disastrous<sup>2</sup>; and as a child he spent most of his time in his father's shop, reading and drawing. In this way he was thrown from his earliest years into contact with his father's customers, among them some of the leading artists and connoisseurs of the day; and it was in their world of activities and ideas his days were chiefly spent.

It was an age of ferment, in which an æsthetic revolution was forerunner to a political and social one. A new wave of enthusiasm for the art of Greece and Rome was passing over Europe. New discoveries had stimulated the study

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Blake*, vol. i, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. an account given by Flaxman of his schooldays to one of his pupils, quoted Teniswood, *Art Journal*, 1868.

## JOHN FLAXMAN

of old material ; and this study was brought to a head in the writings of Winckelmann, which not only threw new light on the art of antiquity, but formulated a definite æsthetic creed to direct the practice of contemporary artists. In England the learned and polite worlds were the first to respond to this new enthusiasm ; and the publication in 1762 of " Athenian " Stuart's *Antiquities of Athens* gave a lead to those who held themselves arbiters of taste, which soon influenced the architects whom they employed. Painters and sculptors, however, were less quick to respond. When Flaxman was a boy, Reynolds was the leading figure among English painters, with Gainsborough his chief rival ; and neither of them was an exponent of neo-classicism. Romney, upon whom the classic revival had much greater influence, was still comparatively unknown. Among sculptors, Roubiliac's influence was still supreme, and his florid accomplishment still set the standard to which contemporaries conformed. Banks had his reputation to make ; while Nollekens was comparatively young, and primarily a maker of portrait busts.

Flaxman's contact was with both the learned and the artistic worlds. Among his father's customers was the Rev. Mr. Mathew, incumbent of Percy Chapel, Charlotte Street. Through him Flaxman came to be introduced to Mrs. Mathew, a friend of Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Chapone, and Mrs. Barbauld. Thus he was thrown, at an impressionable age, into the midst of the blue-stocking circle.



GIRLS DANCING.  
*Pencil Drawing.* (University College, London.)





## EARLY YEARS, 1755-1775

He used to visit Mrs. Mathew to hear her read Homer and Vergil in translations, and was encouraged to study the classics in the original. Whether in this form they ever meant much to him is doubtful ; but the important fact is that almost all Flaxman's early education and most of his early ideas were derived from the literature of Greece and Rome.

On the practical side, classic influence was less direct. Prominent among artists who employed the elder Flaxman were Roubiliac and his follower Scheemakers. Certainly Roubiliac gave Flaxman little encouragement, when shown some of his early drawings. But his example was always before Flaxman's eyes, the embodiment of the skill, elegance, and artificiality of the eighteenth-century French School. Behind it lay classic influence ; but that influence was filtered through rococo channels. Ideals formed on such a model were not likely to be seriously shaken by Flaxman's training at the Royal Academy Schools, which he entered in 1770. Moser, the chaser and enameller, was then Keeper, and exercised little influence upon the students ; and the President, Reynolds, was notoriously indifferent to the work of the sculptors. But the direct influence on Flaxman of classic art, in place of French example, was becoming increasingly possible. There is no evidence that Flaxman had access to the older collections of Greek and Roman art, such as those of the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton, or of the Earl of Arundel, then at Oxford. But other collections, notably those at

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Holkham, Petworth, Castle Howard, and that of Charles Townley were being formed, for which the excavations of Gavin Hamilton and others in the Campagna provided plenty of material. So the importation into England of every type of classic sculpture, including many antique gems, grew rapidly ; and with it the business of restoring, repairing, and making casts, with which Flaxman's father was directly concerned. Much of the work was either the dry and conventional Greco-Roman reproductions of earlier Greek models, or of the dramatic and realistic Hellenistic type. In either case, however, it provided a corrective to the influence of Roubiliac and his like.

That Flaxman had access to classic work is certain from the fact that in 1767, 1768, and 1769 he exhibited models based on the antique at the Free Society of Artists. A powerful incentive towards such study was an early friendship with Romney, who had returned to England from Italy in 1775, full of enthusiasm for classic art. When he and Flaxman first met is uncertain ; but there is evidence of considerable intimacy, and of Flaxman looking towards the older man with some deference. In a letter to Romney's son, Flaxman himself writes : " I always remember Mr. Romney's notice of my boyish years and productions with gratitude ; his original and striking conversation ; . . . and I still feel the benefit of his acquaintance and commendations."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> August 11, 1821. Rev. John Romney, *Memoirs of George Romney*, 1830, p. 232.

## EARLY YEARS, 1755-1775

But in Flaxman's evolution as a sculptor his own character played at least as important a part as external influences. In this, the dominant elements were simplicity of tastes and a puritanical standard of morals. His inclinations were all towards the intimate, the tender, and the sentimental, rather than towards the dramatic and heroic. In the daily life of his home and the companionship of a small circle of intimate friends, he found his chief happiness. His marriage in 1782 with Ann Denman gave him a devoted and affectionate wife ; and though the marriage was childless, the adoption of a sister-in-law gave his affections further scope. At the same time a strongly developed sense of duty and a high conception of the purpose of his art constantly led him to attempt the monumental and grandiose ; and he was confirmed in these attempts by a streak of narrow-mindedness and obstinacy. His views of life and art matured early, and were maintained in later life by instinct rather than reason. Crabb Robinson, who had ample opportunities for observation and was a warm partisan, records a typical instance <sup>1</sup> : " He is delightful in the great purity of his moral sense, . . . but his understanding is not cast in a logical mould ; and when he has a fixed idea, there is no possibility of changing it. He said Linnæus had made a great blunder in classing the whale with man, merely because it belongs to the mammalia. And it was impossible to make him acknowledge, or apparently to comprehend, the difference

<sup>1</sup> *Diaries*, 1811, June 16.

## JOHN FLAXMAN

between an artificial and a natural classification." Thus, what a sense of duty told Flaxman he ought to do, another side of his character helped him to believe he was able to do.

As a youth his career was one of almost unbroken success. An early commission from a Mr. Crutchly<sup>1</sup> for six drawings in black chalk of classical subjects was a prelude to exhibiting at the Free Society, and winning in 1767 first prize for a medal from the Royal Society of Arts. In 1770, the year of his admission to the Royal Academy Schools, he won another prize from the Society of Arts, and was awarded the silver medal of the Academy for a wax model of *Neptune*, one of three exhibits in the same year at the annual exhibition. Cunningham<sup>2</sup> relates that he also took to painting, and that one picture, an *Œdipus and Antigone*, was later sold at auction as *Belisarius* by Domenichino !

Of the work mentioned above nothing is known to survive ; but the four portrait models in wax exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1771 may have included the three medallions now in the possession of Mrs. Wedgwood of Cheshire, one representing Flaxman at the age of fourteen, the others his sister laughing and crying. Also, the *Figure of a Child in Wax* exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1772, is probably the full-length portrait medallion of his sister now in the Victoria and Albert

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Crutchly, of Sunning Hill Park, M.P. for Horsham.

<sup>2</sup> *Lives of British Painters, etc.* 1830, vol. iii, p. 283.



THE CROWNING OF A KETTLARIST.

*Plaque in Jasper Ware.*

(British Museum.)



## EARLY YEARS, 1755-1775

Museum (Frontispiece). Here is intimate charm and tenderness, born of affection and understanding of childhood, such as mark the *putti* of Luca della Robbia. The treatment is simple and frankly realistic, a direct reproduction of the facts of life, with no hint of classic conventions. The influence of these is more likely to have appeared in the bas-relief of a *Vestal*, and the *Figure of the Grecian Comedy*, both exhibited in 1773. But neither survive as witness.

Flaxman's progress, however, received a check from his failure to win the gold medal of the Royal Academy. Apparently, he had counted upon easy victory, and failure was all the more mortifying when it came. It is said that Sir Joshua used his influence against Flaxman. Certainly the relation of the two was not happy, as two incidents related by Flaxman to Farington indicate.<sup>1</sup> Soon after his marriage Sir Joshua met the young couple, and learning they were married said, "Then your improvement is at an end." Subsequently, when Flaxman was going to Rome, he offered to superintend the making of any casts which the Academy might require. Sir Joshua brusquely declined the offer. Flaxman, in his turn, told Farington that Sir Joshua "had written admirably on painting, but occasionally *nonsense* about *sculpture*"<sup>2</sup>; and to Crabb Robinson described him as a "gentlemanly scholar."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Farington, *Diary*, ed. Greig, 1804, June 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1803, February 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Diary and Reminiscences*, 1811, May 7.

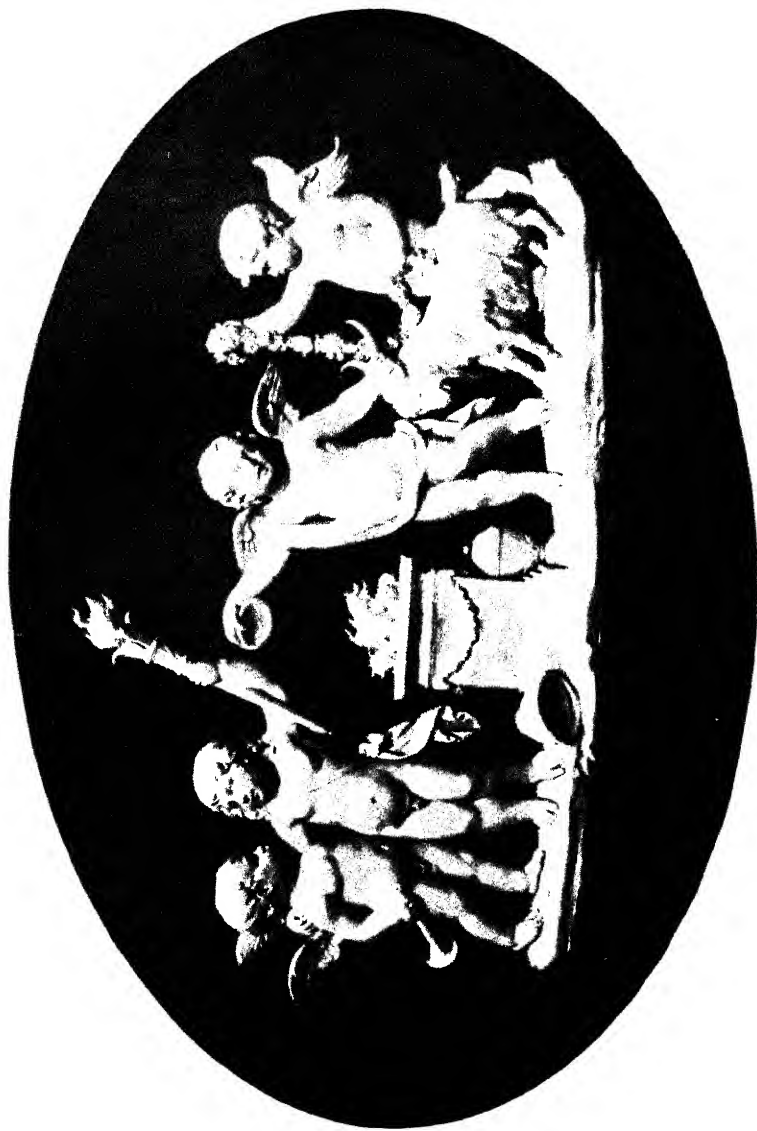


CHAPTER II: *Work for Wedgwood and Others,*  
1775-1787

THE rebuff given by failure to win the gold medal of the Royal Academy probably did Flaxman good, and made him the more ready to accept an offer of work, in 1775, from the great firm of potters Wedgwood & Bentley. Early biographers tend to deplore this step, as the binding of an artist to the chariot-wheels of commerce. In fact, apart from giving Flaxman the means to live, it imposed upon him a discipline which was of great service in the development of his art ; and opened a period of twelve years' association in which he did some of his best work.

Bentley seems to have been the first to detect the suitability of Flaxman for employment. Wedgwood was inclined to be less enthusiastic. In a letter to Bentley<sup>1</sup> he writes : " I am glad you have met with a Modeller and that Flaxman is so valuable an Artist. It is but a few years since he was a most supreme Coxcomb, but a little more experience may have cured him of this foible." Wedgwood was one of the shrewdest and most enlightened men of his age ; and it speaks well for Flaxman's character

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, ed. Farrer, vol. i, January 14, 1775.



CUPIDS WITH A GOAT, 1778.  
(*Plaque in Jasper Ware.*) (British Museum.)



## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD, 1775-1787

that subsequent relations were to breed an esteem and liking, which are evident in a letter from Wedgwood to Mrs. Flaxman, written some time after Flaxman's return from Italy in 1794 and enclosing a pen drawing of Flaxman by John Jackson<sup>1</sup>: "Mr. Wedgwood presents his compliments to Mrs. Flaxman and has the honour to present her with the portrait of the first artist of the age which from her knowledge of his many other good qualities he flatters himself will be favourably received."

It should be clearly understood that Flaxman's relation to Wedgwood was not, as the biographers of both are apt to imply, a case of one established reputation collaborating with another, but that of a young and unformed artist serving a clear-sighted and masterful personality. Flaxman was but one of many artists employed by Wedgwood, who knew exactly what he wanted, and insisted on his artists producing designs not only of good quality, but at a reasonable price, and of a kind which suited the technical processes of reproduction. To these ends he would without hesitation match artist against artist, call for further work on a design, or alter it himself. Since his productions were intended not only as objects of beauty in themselves, but to decorate buildings and furniture, and to be used for such articles as bracelets, brooches, and muff-chains, adaptation of a particular design to varying purposes was inevitable, and to this adaptation the artist had to submit. Wedgwood's attitude towards his artists is clearly revealed

<sup>1</sup> Letter and sketch reproduced, *Art Journal*, 1912, p. 83.

## JOHN FLAXMAN

in his correspondence with Bentley, who conducted the business of the firm in London, while Wedgwood primarily controlled the work at Etruria. Writing on February 14, 1776,<sup>1</sup> he says: "You shall have impressions from the doubtful Greek heads and we will model a Mithridates or any other head or heads you may wish to have and I apprehend we shall model them much cheaper than Flaxman and perhaps as well in other respects, provided we have Fine Prints or impressions from Gems to model from, but I wish you would give Flaxman a head or two to Model as it may excite our Modelers' [at Etruria] emulation and acquaint us with the prices for which those things may be done in London. . . ."

Writing on October 29, 1777,<sup>2</sup> with reference to the famous designs of the *Muses* which he had asked Bentley to get Flaxman to model, and which were later so widely employed on Wedgwood ware, he says: "Having laid all our bass-relief Goddesses and ladies upon their backs on a board before me in order to contemplate their beauties and to increase their number, I instantly perceiv'd that the six Muses we want [others had been obtained earlier] might be produc'd from this lovely group at half the trouble and expence they will be procur'd from Flaxman and much better figures. For little more than 5s. each we can complete them very well. I hope you may not have order'd them to be model'd as I desired you would

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, ed. Farrer, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*





## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD, 1775-1787

[in a letter of October 27, 1777 : see Appendix II], but if you have so be it—it is only so much loss.”<sup>1</sup>

On the technical side, Wedgwood was particularly insistent. In the well-known jasper ware with white figures in relief on a coloured ground, difficulties were always apt to arise from the ground showing through the thinner parts of the relief. Wedgwood's first letter to Bentley concerning a commission for Flaxman mentions the point<sup>2</sup>: “Perhaps Flaxman can model you a good Tablet for a chimney-piece—you know we have not one of a proper size. It should be modelled upon a piece of ground glass or marble and you may allow an inch at 8 for shrinking. I need not tell you that the Figures should be open and managed properly for a coloured ground.”

On July 9, 1776, he wrote regarding a model Flaxman was then making<sup>3</sup>: “Mr. Flaxman's model is too flat in several parts to be made in coloured grounds and we can sooner finish our own than raise our models. . . . In some things the blue shade which our ground is so apt to cast through the thin parts of the white may be of advantage to the subject. . . . But when the naked part of the Figure is penetrated with the colour of the ground, it is generally injurious. See the poor Queen's nose and many other Cameos.”

<sup>1</sup> In fact, tradition says that the order had been placed. See p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> January 15, 1775. Quoted Meteyard, *Life of Josiah Wedgwood*, vol. ii, pp. 321-2.

<sup>3</sup> Meteyard, *op. cit.*, ii, 366.



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Flaxman accepted the dictation. For example, writing on December 13, 1785, he says in connection with a proposed bas-relief of *Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides*<sup>1</sup> : " I should also be particularly obliged to you for instructions respecting the thickness—if it might be done as thin as the work on the before mentioned Vase [Sir William Hamilton's *Murrhin Vase*] it would be the more perfect and the blue ground might shew thro' the thin parts of the drapery, which several Artists and other persons of taste have remarked to me is a great advantage where it can be done ; but if it must be thicker you will be so kind to let me have a pattern."

Similarly, referring to a bas-relief of *Mars and Peace*, Flaxman writes on January 12, 1787 : " I have sent the Model without any mould because I apprehend on second thoughts your people will make a mould better and fitter for your purpose than I can."

Wedgwood was equally decided on the question of making his designs suit his customer's taste. A notable instance is in a letter of February 11, 1790, written to Flaxman, who was then in Rome and supervising some models which were being prepared for Wedgwood<sup>2</sup> : " The history of Orestes is an excellent classic subject likewise, . . . but there is one objection which I am afraid is insurmountable and that is the nakedness of the figures. . . . The same objection applies to the *Judgment*

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished letter, Etruria Mus. MS 1337.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, ed. Farrer, vol. ii.

## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD, 1775-1787

*of Paris* and the other pieces; and indeed the nude is so general in the works of the ancients, that it will be very difficult to avoid the introduction of naked figures. On the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to do so, or to keep the pieces for our own use, for none either male or female, of the present generation, will take or apply them as furniture, if the figures are naked."

From the foregoing letters, and from the drawings and models preserved in the Museum at Etruria, it is fairly clear how a design first took shape, and then reached its final form. Wedgwood suggested the kind of work he wanted. Flaxman would then submit a drawing for approval, and on receiving this, prepared a wax model. Sometimes he would make a plaster mould from this, but generally this was left to the workmen at Etruria. From this mould, what is called a block mould in biscuit was made, which, after being worked on by the modellers at Etruria, became the basis of moulds from which the impressions actually fired were derived.

Thus, in working for Wedgwood, Flaxman had that most salutary and bracing experience for a young artist, of working for a definite end, in competition with others, under constant and enlightened supervision. Moreover, Wedgwood's standard in design and craftsmanship was the antique; and to this standard his artists had to conform. In this way another channel for the direct influence of classic art upon Flaxman was opened. This influence became considerably stronger in the later years of Flax-

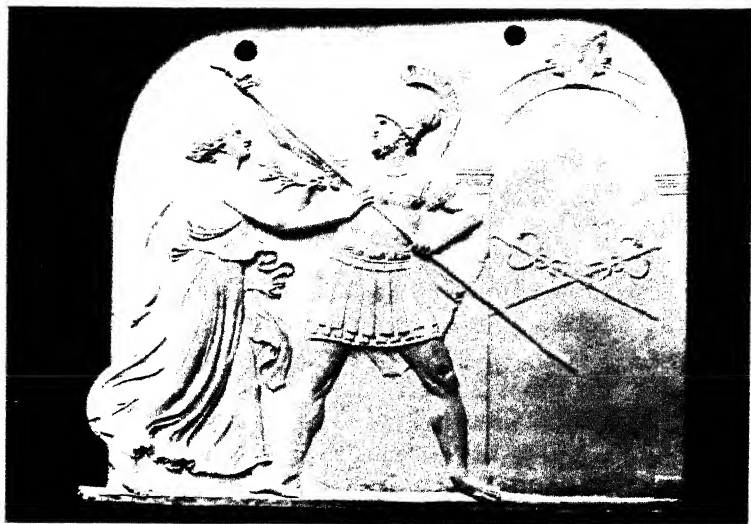
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man's association with Wedgwood. But throughout the period his realistic instincts and the early contact with French eighteenth-century sculpture had their effect, and joined with a taste for Gothic art to modify the growing strength of classic example.

To ascertain exactly and in detail the work which Flaxman did for Wedgwood is not easy. Written records are fragmentary; traditions have been lost or corrupted; and style is unsafe ground for identification. Other modellers employed by Wedgwood, such as Hackwood, though less original than Flaxman, were equally skilful at imitating or adapting the antique; while some of Flaxman's known work was itself modified or altered at Etruria, so that to set Flaxman's work in isolation is impossible. Nevertheless, from letters and from some accounts fortunately preserved in the Etruria Museum, a fairly complete list of the work from Flaxman's own hand can be made.<sup>1</sup> This work was at first less extensive and less varied than is sometimes supposed. It has often been assumed, following Miss Meteyard in her *Life of Josiah Wedgwood*, that the receipted accounts at Etruria between Flaxman and Wedgwood refer exclusively to the work of the younger Flaxman. The accounts are for work done in 1775, 1779, 1781, 1782, 1783, 1784, 1785, 1787, and 1788.<sup>2</sup> Of these, the bill of 1775 is receipted

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Reproduced in full, with two important exceptions, in Meteyard, *op. cit.* For references, see Appendix II.



PEACE AND MARS.

*Biscuit Plaque.*  
(British Museum.)



ILLUSTRATION TO HESIOD: THE GOOD RACE.

*Pen Drawing.*



## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD, 1775-1787

by John Flaxman, junr. "for my father"; one of the 1781 bills, one of the 1784 bills, and the 1788 bill are receipted by John Flaxman, senr.; and the 1782 bill and receipt are in the same handwriting as these. Until his marriage in 1782 Flaxman lived with his father at his shop in the Strand, and may have done work for him. But even so, the bills are insufficient evidence that the articles described in them were original work by the younger Flaxman. They were more probably casts or reproductions from the antique and other sculpture. In the case of the famous *Wine* and *Water* jars, with respectively a satyr and a triton handle, which appear in the 1775 bill and have long been confidently described as designed by Flaxman, the doubt is reinforced by evidence that the design is of eighteenth-century French origin and perhaps by Clodion. Similarly, in the absence of independent proof, Flaxman cannot be regarded as designer of such well-known work as *Apollo* and four *Muses* (included in the bill of 1775), to which he was commissioned later to add six *Muses*; the bas-relief of *The Four Seasons* (1775); *Cupid and Psyche* (1781); the busts of *Dr. Fothergill* (1781), *Mrs. Siddons* (1782), *Hercules* (1784), and *Homer* (1788); all of which appear in bills receipted by or for his father.

Flaxman's first certain work for Wedgwood which can be identified was two portrait medallions of *Mr.* (later *Sir Joseph*) *Banks* and of *Dr. Solander*, which were finished in 1775. In this type of work he became skilful

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and tolerably prolific. An excellent example is the signed but undated portrait of *Thomas Bentley*, soberly realistic in treatment and expressive of the sitter's character (Plate I).<sup>1</sup> This realism and restraint marks the whole series of portrait medallions, of which the last made for Wedgwood was one of the *Prince of Piedmont*, which was sent from Italy in 1788. Sometimes, however, a studied negligence in drapery arrangement, excessive elaboration of curling hair, and display of fluttering ribbons, witness the influence of the French rococo.

Flaxman's method of making these medallions is suggested by two entries in a bill of 1784, relating to a profile portrait of *Doctor Johnson*. Following a charge on February 3 of two guineas for the wax model is the entry "A print of the Dr. for assistance in the model, 2s. 6d." This print is probably the profile portrait engraved by Watson in 1770. It was from this and not from life that Flaxman worked ; and so the unduly youthful appearance of Johnson in a medallion made in 1784 is explained.<sup>2</sup>

In the bas-reliefs, however, produced in direct imitation of classic models, the influence of the antique is uppermost. The earliest work of this kind which can

<sup>1</sup> This portrait should be distinguished from another of Bentley c. 1778, called by Wedgwood "al antique," of which nothing is known to connect it with Flaxman.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. C. B. Tinker, *The Wedgwood Medallion of Samuel Johnson*, 1926 ; and *Times Lit. Supp.* Correspondence, March 10, 1927.



CHESSMEN.  
*Jasper Ware.*  
(British Museum.)





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reasonably be given to Flaxman is the six *Muses* modelled in 1777 to make up a set with an *Apollo* and some *Muses* which Wedgwood already had. In the letter of October 29, 1777, quoted above, Wedgwood countermanded the commission given in a previous letter; but the long-established tradition is that Bentley had placed the order before the second letter arrived, and that six of the *Muses* are therefore by Flaxman.<sup>1</sup> In any case, the figures are scarcely a fair test of his abilities. They had to match in general character the earlier figures; and being designed as single figures and not as a group, gave little scope to Flaxman's power of harmonious arrangement. This, however, is fully displayed in the famous relief of *The Dancing Hours*, which was finished by 1778 (Plate II). In a letter to Bentley,<sup>2</sup> Wedgwood refers to this as follows: "The tablets of dancing hours in this inv<sup>o</sup> are intended as frises to the marr<sup>e</sup> of cupid etc. which with two of the season's for blocks will make a very complete chimney piece. I have made frises of Apollo and the muses to accompany the new tablet of Homer etc. . . ." This letter gives an interesting glimpse of how Wedgwood employed his models as a decoration for fire-

<sup>1</sup> Four Muses (Melpomene, Thalia, Terpsichore, Euterpe) appear in the bill of 1775. But according to Wedgwood's letter to Bentley dated October 27, 1777 (see Appendix II), he did not accept Euterpe. This accounts for his wanting *six* more Muses.

<sup>2</sup> April 1778. Dated "Sunday morning." *Letters*, ed. Farrer, vol. i.

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places. The principal piece, in this case *The Marriage of Cupid*, formed the centre of the cross-piece, and was flanked by the two plaques of *The Dancing Hours*; while two oval medallions of *The Seasons* filled the spaces above the vertical side-pieces.

*The Dancing Hours* is the earliest surviving work certainly by Flaxman in which classic influence appears.<sup>1</sup> The main motive is similar to that of the famous late Greek or Greco-Roman relief in the Louvre, known as *Les Danseuses Borghese*, and may have been suggested by a cast from this or from one of its many derivatives. The facial types and the treatment of the drapery also witness classic influence. But the skill with which the figures are woven into a balanced and rhythmic design is Flaxman's own; and beneath the conventions of attitude and drapery is a freshness and spontaneity which has its source in direct contact with nature. That this no less than classic example inspired the design is evident from comparison with such a drawing as the charming *Girls Dancing*, now in the collection at University College, London (Plate III).

In 1778 also was finished the relief called by Wedgwood *The Apotheosis of Homer*, but now generally known as *The Crowning of a Kitharist* (Plate IV). In modelling this, Flaxman worked definitely in classical leading-strings, since it was directly derived from a print or cast of a relief

<sup>1</sup> A reproduction from Flaxman's original model is in the Etruria Museum. In later versions some changes in detail were made.



SELF-PORTRAIT OF FLAXMAN, 1779.

*Wax Medallion, three-fifths full size.*

*(Victoria and Albert Museum.)*

*By permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.*



## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD, 1775-1787

then in the Colonna Palace. Consequently, it lacks the easy flow of *The Dancing Hours*. This reappears, however, in a group of reliefs representing children. A good example is *Cupids with a Goat* or *A Sacrifice to Hymen* of 1778 (Plate V), said to have been designed as a pendant to the plaque of *The Marriage of Cupid*, which reproduced an antique gem. More vivacious are the four designs of *Blind Man's Buff*, *A Game of Marbles*, and two *Triumphs of Cupid* which were made in 1782 and intended to decorate the sides of teapots.<sup>1</sup> For these, antique gems provided a model and standard; but they also reflect Flaxman's assiduous study of the movements and attitudes of children, apparent in many drawings, of which *Mothers and Children* is a pleasant example (Plate VI). Likewise there is a touch of the graceful sentimentality of eighteenth-century France which makes them kin to the work of Clodion.

In time, however, classic influence tended to submerge other elements. This is evident in the two reliefs of *Peace preventing Mars from bursting open the Gates of the Temple of Janus* (Plate VII) and of *Mercury uniting the Hands of England and France*. These are among Flaxman's latest work for Wedgwood, being executed in 1787 to commemorate the commercial treaty between England and France concluded in the previous year. There was here no question of reproducing or making a pendant to

<sup>1</sup> Flaxman to Wedgwood, October 28, 1782. Meteyard, *op. cit.*, i. 487.

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a classic design ; but there is a stricter adherence to classic types and a greater formality of design than before, evidence of a more conscious and deliberate acceptance of Greco-Roman standards and conventions.

In the later years of his association with Wedgwood the range of Flaxman's work widened, his remuneration increased, and his relations with the firm became more intimate and confidential. Through the death of Bentley in 1780 Flaxman lost a friend ; but his relations with Thomas Byerley, Wedgwood's nephew, who succeeded Bentley in managing the London end of the business, were equally cordial. The last account between Flaxman and the firm was kept running from July 11, 1783, to August 10, 1787, and amounted to the considerable sum of £188 4s. 2d., which was met by periodical payments on account between 1785 and 1787. Flaxman, in fact, came to use the firm as a kind of bank. For example, between 1784 and 1786 Flaxman had erected a monument to *Rousseau* for a Mr. Fierville, who had become bankrupt ; and at the bottom of a bill for the work, Flaxman directs the payment of the remaining dividends to Byerley, to be placed to his account. Again, while in Rome, Flaxman asks Byerley to pay on one occasion Mr. James Kirk sixteen guineas, and on another Mr. John Matthews four guineas, debiting him [Flaxman] with those sums.

During this period, in addition to portrait medallions and bas-reliefs, Flaxman designed many miscellaneous articles for Wedgwood. Among these was a cornice for

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the saloon at Etruria Hall, and the marble work of a stove made for Wedgwood by a Mr. Hopkins, both in 1782 ; and among the contents of a box sent from London to Etruria in that year was " A model from Mr. Flaxman as a specimen of the Dessert Table Statues this is the Earth."<sup>1</sup> None of these statues survives, however, even if the project ever matured. Later commissions included several drawings of crests and coats-of-arms, a design for a lamp and a stand, and two marble chimney-pieces, the last finished and set up in September 1787. Considerably more interesting and important, however, are the famous chessmen (Plate VIII), first mentioned in the bill of 1783, when Flaxman was paid for *A Figure of a Fool for Chess*, which served as a pawn. A drawing of the whole set was sent to Wedgwood in March 1785, and is now in the Etruria Museum. The original designs include three kings and three queens, castle, knight, and bishop, and eight pawns, all different.<sup>2</sup> Some of the wax models prepared from the final designs are also at Etruria and embody Flaxman's own ideas. When carried out in jasper ware, however, variations were introduced, and there is no evidence how far this was done with Flaxman's knowledge and consent,

<sup>1</sup> Etruria Museum MS. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. J. D. Holmes, who has made a special study of the chessmen and their history, has pointed out to me that at University College, London, is a study of a horse and rider which evidently served as basis for the design of the knight. He has also seen finished designs for the kings and queens which were discarded for those eventually used.



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except in the case of the three sets in the Soane Museum, which belonged to Flaxman and were presumably approved by him.

The main interest of the chessmen is their revealing the early influence upon Flaxman of Gothic art—an influence more or less present in all his later work, which justifies Nathaniel Marchant's acute remark that "his [Flaxman's] designs are a mixture of the Antique and the Gothic."<sup>1</sup>

An early friendship with Stothard had brought Flaxman into touch with Blake, and before 1780 the two had become fairly intimate. Blake's youthful passion for medieval art joined Stothard's more tepid enthusiasm to stimulate the same tastes in Flaxman. The chessmen were an early consequence. The costumes of the figures are those of the kings, queens, soldiers, and prelates in medieval sculpture and illuminated manuscripts; and their source is suggested in Flaxman's lectures at the Royal Academy, after his appointment there in 1810 as Professor of Sculpture, in which he displays considerable knowledge of English Gothic sculpture, notably that of Wells and Westminster.<sup>2</sup> The attitudes of the figures are more strained and affected than those of the best Gothic sculpture and the treatment of the drapery less spirited; but their

<sup>1</sup> Farington, *Diary*, ed. Greig, 1806, April 11.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Holmes has discovered in Wells Cathedral a figure of a bishop which is identical with that of Flaxman's bishop.



MONUMENT TO MRS. SARAH MORLEY.  
(Gloucester Cathedral.)

*Photograph by Sydney Pitcher, A.R.P.S., Gloucester.*



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virtues derive from the Middle Ages, and not from Greece and Rome.

Flaxman's work for Wedgwood by no means absorbed all his energies. He exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy, his work including portrait medallions, bas-reliefs and models in the round of classical subjects, and busts. The *Portrait in terra-cotta*, exhibited in 1779, may have been derived from the medallion self-portrait, full-face, in wax, which is signed and dated 1779, and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate IX). This in turn was based upon a drawing, also signed and dated 1779, now at University College, London. In both drawing and medallion, Flaxman gave his realistic instincts full play. In the medallion the height of the relief is uncomfortably high in proportion to its area; but uncompromising sincerity of outlook, keen observation, and sensitive modelling have produced a piece of vigorous characterisation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is probably the self-portrait which Wedgwood contemplated reproducing in 1779, though he apparently did not do so. Miss Meteyard, in her *Life of Wedgwood*, mistakenly describes the portrait to be reproduced as the profile medallion, in wax, which was formerly in the Falcke Collection and is now in the British Museum. This, however, represents Flaxman as considerably older than twenty-four, and is almost certainly the medallion made in Rome, with a pendant portrait of Mrs. Flaxman, casts of which are in the Soane Museum. The mistake no doubt arose from the British Museum wax having been reproduced later by the firm of Wedgwood.

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Other patrons than Wedgwood also began to come forward. Among these was William Hayley, Romney's friend, patron, and biographer. In 1781 he added a large room to his house at Earham, for which Flaxman superintended the making of the sculpture and ornaments, and also modelled busts of *Hayley* and *Romney*.<sup>1</sup> For a Mr. Knight of Portland Place, perhaps the well-known connoisseur Richard Payne Knight, Flaxman modelled in 1784 a marble figure of *Alexander*, and in 1787 a *Venus and Cupid*,<sup>2</sup> both of which are now said to be at Wolverley Hall, Worcestershire.

Of greater importance, however, was the beginning of what was to become Flaxman's chief occupation in later years, the making of monuments to the dead. The earliest work of the kind seems to have been a sketch for a monument to *Chatterton*, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780. This monument was, however, never erected; the only known memorial to Chatterton being an inferior work of later date by another hand in the churchyard of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. With his next design Flaxman had better fortune. This was for the monument in Gloucester Cathedral to *Mrs. Sarah Morley* and her newly born baby, who were drowned at sea in 1784 (Plate X). The main theme is that of mother and child rising from the waves, escorted heavenwards by angels. In conception and treatment the influence of Roubiliac

<sup>1</sup> Gilchrist, *Blake*, i, 166.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the *Venus and Cupid* exhibited R.A., 1787 (665).



STUDIES OF ROMAN CLOAKS.

*Pen Drawing.*

(University College London.)



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s strong. The sentimentality is characteristic of Flaxman himself; but the pseudo-realistic types, the elaborate affectation of the draperies, the attempt to represent sea and cloud in marble, the turgid design, and the excessive relief which makes the figures look as though they are glued to the wall, are all an inheritance from the last stages of the baroque.

Less ambitious and more successful was the monument to the *Rev. Thomas Ball* and his wife in Chichester Cathedral, the model for which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1785, and the finished bas-relief in marble in 1786. This represents, within an oval frame, an angel comforting a mourning woman. Again exaggerated sentiment is the keynote; but the grouping of the figures is simpler and more impressive than in the Morley monument, the handling less affected, and the relation of relief to background better managed. The restraining effect of contact with the antique and of Wedgwood's discipline is evident.



CHAPTER III: *Work in Italy, 1787-1794 ;  
Illustrations to Books*

IN 1787 Flaxman and his wife went to Italy. This important step, then considered almost indispensable for the training of a sculptor, seems to have been recommended by Romney, who also offered financial assistance.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, from Wedgwood that help chiefly came. It is said that he advanced money for the journey<sup>2</sup> ; and he certainly gave Flaxman letters of introduction, and through his agents, Micali & Son of Leghorn, made easy the transport of Flaxman's luggage. A list of the contents of part of this, in Flaxman's own handwriting, is preserved in the Etruria Museum<sup>3</sup> and throws an interesting light on the needs of a traveller at the period. In addition to a considerable stock of clothing, there were modelling tools, painting sticks, ten dozen and a half lead pencils, and some classical books, noted as "neither Religious or Political." The articles are described as the property of four persons, so Flaxman and his wife had fellow-travellers,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. John Romney, *Memoirs of George Romney*, 1830, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Meteyard, *op. cit.*, ii. 506.

<sup>3</sup> Reprod. Meteyard, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 506.



THE FURY OF ATHAMAS. 1790-2.

*Marble.*

(Marquis of Bristol, Ickworth.)

*Photograph by H. I. Tarnan. Bury St. Edmunds.*



## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

of whom one may be a Doctor Bates mentioned in a letter from Flaxman to Byerley.<sup>1</sup>

Wedgwood's most substantial service to Flaxman, however, was to maintain the connection between them, though on a different footing from that of earlier years. Flaxman continued to do a certain amount of original work for the firm. For example, on March 15, 1788, he sent with a letter to Byerley<sup>2</sup> a wax medallion of the *Prince of Piedmont*, and in the letter says, "I shall employ all the time I can for Mr. W."; and writing again to Byerley<sup>3</sup> on December 24, 1788, he refers to finishing "a bas-relief restored from the antique of the birth of Bacchus for Mr. W." Principally, however, Flaxman served Wedgwood by supervising the work of Devaere, a young sculptor in Wedgwood's employ, helping in the choice of subjects, and supervising their execution.<sup>4</sup> He did not, however, as is sometimes said, control the main enterprises of the firm in Italy. That was the business first of Webber, who later became a leading modeller at Etruria, and then of Jenkins, an English banker in Rome, by whom Flaxman was himself sometimes paid. Flaxman, however, continued to use the firm as a banker.

Flaxman left England in the early autumn.<sup>5</sup> While

<sup>1</sup> December 24, 1788. Etruria Mus. MS. 1342.

<sup>2</sup> Etruria Mus. MS. 210.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 1342.

<sup>4</sup> Wedgwood to Flaxman, February 11, 1790. Etruria Mus. MS. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Cunningham says spring; but references in letters prove him wrong.

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in Paris he arranged a business meeting between Byerley and the Duc de Bouillon,<sup>1</sup> with whom Flaxman had been in touch previously on Wedgwood's behalf.<sup>2</sup> From Paris he went to Rome, and settled in lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna.<sup>3</sup> His first impressions of Rome were not favourable. In reply to Farington's inquiry<sup>4</sup>: "He said he was disappointed. On entering the streets He found them narrow and dark; and when He came among the ruins of ancient buildings He found them on a smaller scale, and less striking than he had been accustomed to suppose them after having seen the prints of Piranesi. (All but the Colosseum.)" But Flaxman found living cheap. "His expences, Mrs. Flaxman being with him, amounted to no more than £120 a year. They were economists: but were comfortable."

Flaxman's original intention had been to stay in Italy two years<sup>5</sup>; in fact he remained seven. Much of this time he spent in the study of works of art, visiting the chief sites of classical antiquity near Rome, the more important collections of classical sculpture, and many towns in North Italy. A journal now in the Library of University College, London, inscribed "Naples Jan. 20th 1788,"

<sup>1</sup> Flaxman to Byerley, Paris, September 29, 1787. Etruria Mus. MS.

<sup>2</sup> Duc de Bouillon to Flaxman, February 28, 1786. Etruria Mus. MS.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Romney, May 25, 1788. Rev. John Romney, *op. cit.*, 204.

<sup>4</sup> *Diary*, ed. Greig, 1795, December 16.

<sup>5</sup> Josiah Wedgwood to Sir William Hamilton, June 16, 1787: "Unfortunately I must lose the advantage of Mr. Flaxman's assistance as he is preparing to go to Italy for two years" (Etruria Mus. MS.).

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and a sketch-book in the Victoria and Albert Museum are valuable evidence of his diligence. The journal, besides a few sketches from contemporary life, includes a long and laboriously written account of the collections at Portici, and a briefer one of the Palace at Capo di Monte, several sketches of Pompeii, and some classic architectural details and figures copied from antique paintings. The sketch-book is more interesting. Much of it is given up to careful sketches from antique bas-reliefs, mainly of the florid Greco-Roman type. But there are also careful studies from the Cavallini mosaics in Sta Maria in Trastevere ; from the work of Ghiberti both at Siena and Florence ; from the reliefs of Donatello and of Brunelleschi in S. Lorenzo, Florence ; from the paintings in the Campo Santo of Pisa ; from a painting by Spinello Aretino described as being " at the Inn Buon Convento " <sup>1</sup> ; from Duccio's *Maesta* ; from Niccolò Pisano's reliefs at Lucca and Siena ; from the painting of *The Flood* by Paolo Uccello in Sta Maria Novella, Florence ; from the tombs of the Scaligers at Verona ; and from the reliefs on the front of the Cathedral at Orvieto. Of the last there are two, each inscribed " Mr. Ottley," which suggest that Flaxman came into touch with one of the principal agencies through which the cult of early Italian art was developed in England.

Evidently, therefore, Flaxman indulged his taste for

<sup>1</sup> From the sketch this seems to be *The Virgin of Mercy* by Parr Spinelli, now in the Gallery of Arezzo.

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medieval art to the full, and developed a judgment which for the period was singularly discriminating. Moreover, he did not neglect study of contemporary life. The Roman cloak, in every variety of its fall and swing, fascinated him, and provided material for many studies, which were later to do useful service in his work (Plate XI); and the Roman women and children provided subjects for a large group of drawings.<sup>1</sup> Realism in these sketches is tempered by a linear convention; but they have the virtues of direct observation and the freshness of quick record. Also, to quote Cunningham, Flaxman "availed himself too of certain facilities which the free manners of Italy afford for studying from living models, especially of female beauty."

Nevertheless, Flaxman spent most of his time holding his nose to the grindstone of the antique. A letter written to Romney from Rome in 1788 makes this clear and gives an interesting account of the work on which Flaxman was then engaged.<sup>2</sup>

"ROME, *May 25th*, 1788.

"DEAR SIR,

"Although I have not written to you before this time, you have been no less present to my thoughts than when I was in England; and if you will permit me to use so familiar an expression, I can say with truth, my dear friend Romney will always occupy one of the first places

<sup>1</sup> The best collection is at University College, London.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. John Romney, *op. cit.*, 204.







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in my mind, as well for his talents and virtues, as for the obligations I am under to him. I hope you will not doubt what I say, and yet I think you will excuse me for not writing before, considering where I am, and how I have been employed ; for, since I have been in Italy, the first three months was spent in seeing works of art, and making a few drawings ; and since that time, in settling myself in lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna, where Clarisseau formerly lived, in Cunego's house, getting a study to work in, and in arranging my pursuits. I am at present making a copy in clay of the bas relief on the Borghese vase, the figures one foot high, for Mr. Knight, who I am sure will be happy to shew it to you, when I send it to England. I am besides making designs and models for a group of my own composition, the subjects of these sketches are various : in the meantime I study nature, and the fine forms of the Antique. Excuse my vanity for telling you my drawings have surprised some of the best English artists here, who thought they were copied from the stories on Greek vases. I am also copying some drawings from the frieze in the temple of Minerva at Athens. Now you will expect some slight account of what I have seen. I have been at Paestum and seen the three fine temples of the ancient Doric order in that city ; they are in better preservation than any ancient temple in Rome, except the Pantheon. The idea of each of these buildings is so simple, the larger parts so truly great, the small members done with so much feeling and delicacy

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that my mind was filled with the sublime of architecture. If you have not seen this place the sketch beneath will convey an idea of the first view I had of it ; the wall of the city is still entire, and over one of the gates is the figure of a Syren in bas relief ; the age of this place is the same with the Etruscan vases in the museum, and they are both the works of Greek colonies, who settled on this coast of Italy. The museum of Portici has had no great things added to it since you was in Italy. I will be more particular in the description of what I saw in this neighbourhood when we meet, when I will also shew you sketches from some of the principal buildings at Pompeia. You will naturally suppose how much I was wrapt in fancy when I saw the Phlegrean plains, where the giants were said to be overthrown by the thunder of Jupiter ; the island of the Syrens ; the situations of Herculaneum and Pompeia, with the Elysian fields at one view ; and walked on the same ground where Homer, Plato, and Pythagoras had been ; as well as those venerable professors of the arts of design, whose steps I humbly endeavour to follow. But I must now tell you the news of Rome, which is most interesting. Mr. Hawkins is returned to Rome from his tour of Greece ; he is an honour to mankind in great qualities, and the most valuable acquired accomplishments ; he informs me, a French artist whom he was acquainted with at Athens, has moulded the frieze of the temple of Minerva in that city, and sent them to Paris, where they are arrived I believe by this time ; they are to be placed



DESIGNS FOR A MONUMENT TO WILLIAM COLLINS (II).

*Pen and Wash Drawing.*

(British Museum.)



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in the Royal Academy. This is an invaluable acquisition to all the northern part of Europe. There is a report that the artist who made these casts, will also bring casts of the finest pieces with him to this city in his return to France. I am concerned to tell you that the noble group of the Toro went to Naples about three weeks ago, and the Duke of Tuscany is removing all the statues, granite basons, and the obelisk from the gardens of the Villa Medici to Florence ; but to make some amends for these losses the Pope is continually adding some valuable piece of art to his museum. It is not possible in the compass of a letter to give any account of particulars. I can only observe that in rooms built of fine architecture, and the richest marbles, with pavements of the finest Mosaics with figures historical, theatrical, etc., all of antique workmanship, here are to be seen groups, statues, busts, bas reliefs, and therms innumerable, of the most wonderful productions of art, together with many animals, and fragments of animals broken from statues, the size of nature ; as heads of bulls, cows, horses, camels, elks, rhinoceroses, mules, asses, and whole statues of lions, goats, and other inferior animals, which give an unlucky contradiction to those wise connoisseurs, who assert that the ancients did not represent animals well ; for these are every thing but alive. You have seen the Etruscan vases and the other curiosities of this museum. I must mention excellent news for the arts in England. Colonel Campbell is returning, and brings with him to London three hundred

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Etruscan vases, many adorned with the finest historical paintings; and a collection of all the plaister casts from the finest antiques he could purchase in Italy. You know by this time Sir Richard Worsley is returned with several valuable bas reliefs he got in Greece, and engravings as well as the original drawings by Pars of the frieze of the temple of Minerva at Athens. I could say much concerning the manner my mind has been affected by the fine things I have seen here, but I hope this will be better explained by my future works. Permit me now to hope you, Mr. Hayley, and Mr. Long have been in perfect health since I left England: my Nancy and myself talk of you continually, and remember how much we are obliged for such rare friends. I shall write to Mr. Hayley soon, and I am sorry I cannot write to all my friends as much as I wish: but I find myself more and more immersed every day in such studies as are necessary to make me a good artist. Pray permit me to beg of you when you see my Father to give my duty to him and my Mother, and love to my Sister; tell him I have wrote to him lately, and I will write again before it's long. Pray accept the best wishes of my Nancy and myself, and believe me, with all gratitude for your several instances of friendship, to remain,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your most obliged and faithful servant,

“ JOHN FLAXMAN, JUNR.

“ Letters are directed to me, to the care of Mr. Jenkins.



MONUMENT TO WILLIAM COLLINS.

*Marble.*

(Chichester Cathedral.)

*Photograph by Messrs. Valentine, Dundee.*





## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

Rome, but I know how your time is engaged, and do not expect an answer."

An added incentive to study of the antique was a commission from Romney. In connection with his work for Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, Romney was anxious to acquire a collection of casts as an aid to painting the figure. He therefore sent Flaxman £100 to purchase such as he considered suitable.<sup>1</sup> Flaxman spent some time and trouble on the work, the results of which he described in a letter of 1792 to Romney :

"ROME, *Sept.* 12th, 1792.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have sent you ten large cases of plaister casts by the Ship Arno from Leghorn, John Burstall, Master ; they were carefully packed under my own observation, and I hope will arrive safe. I have spent several months in collecting them ; some I have had moulded from the antique on purpose, and I think I have sent you the cream of the finest things in Rome, as far as the money would go—there is a group of Laocoon and his Sons, which cost eighty Roman crowns, or eighteen pounds English—the Apollo Belvidere cost forty Roman crowns, or nine pounds English. I have sent you besides, groups of Castor and Pollux, of Cupid and Psyche, a figure of Apollo the lizard-killer, a cast of the bas relief on the Burghese vase—a fine bas relief of the destruction of Niobe's family, several

<sup>1</sup> Rev. John Romney, *op. cit.*, 230.

## JOHN FLAXMAN

busts, and all the best fragments of legs and arms, etc., which I could find—the whole of the casts cost fifty-seven pounds ten shillings, English, or two hundred and fifty Roman crowns—the packing cases, packing, and portorage, eighty-four Roman crowns, or nineteen pounds English—the custom-house duties, shipping, and carriage to Leghorn, twelve pounds ten shillings—so that in all I have laid out eighty-eight pounds ten shillings.—I have remaining in my hands eleven pounds ten shillings, which I will lay out in other casts and send them to you as soon as possible.—I have sent the bill of lading enclosed. You will do me the favour to let me know when you have received this letter ; or, if you have not time to write, be so kind to call on my sister, and desire her to let me know. If any of the casts should be broken pray let my father mend them ; or if he has a mind to mould any of the smaller articles pray let him. My employments at present are, finishing Lord Bristol's great group in marble, making a model for a restoration of the Torso Belvidere, and, in the evenings, making a series of drawings from Homer and Dante, which are engraving. Pray give my duty to my father and mother when you see them, and tell them I shall certainly see them the beginning of the ensuing summer at farthest with God's permission—with gratitude for all your kindness, and warmest wishes for your health and happiness, I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

“ Your obedient Servant,

“ J. FLAXMAN, JUN.”

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Flaxman's views concerning "the cream of the finest things in Rome" are important in relation to his own work. They indicate the standards which were being formed in his mind, and suggest that for him classic art meant primarily the realism and dramatic emphasis of Hellenistic and Greco-Roman work.

Among the references to other work at the end of the letter is one to a laborious consequence of Flaxman's study of the antique—his attempt to reconstruct the well-known torso in the Vatican, generally known as the *Torso di Belvedere*, as a group of *Hercules and Hebe*. This enterprise never got beyond the stage of plaster, though Flaxman was urged by Thomas Hope of Deepdene to carry the group out in marble; and it is often said that Flaxman in later years, dissatisfied with it, had the cast broken up. Its presence to-day in the Slade School, however, is sufficient contradiction of the story.

Time was also found for original work. The English colony in Italy did their duty towards their fellow-countrymen, though that duty seems to have been coloured by the conscious pride of patronage. Thomas Hope commissioned an *Aurora and Cephalus*; and the notorious Frederick Hervey, Bishop of Derry and Earl of Bristol, persuaded Flaxman to undertake a life-sized group representing the incident from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* when Ino endeavours to rescue her children from destruction by their father Athamas.

The origin of this commission, and its effect in delaying

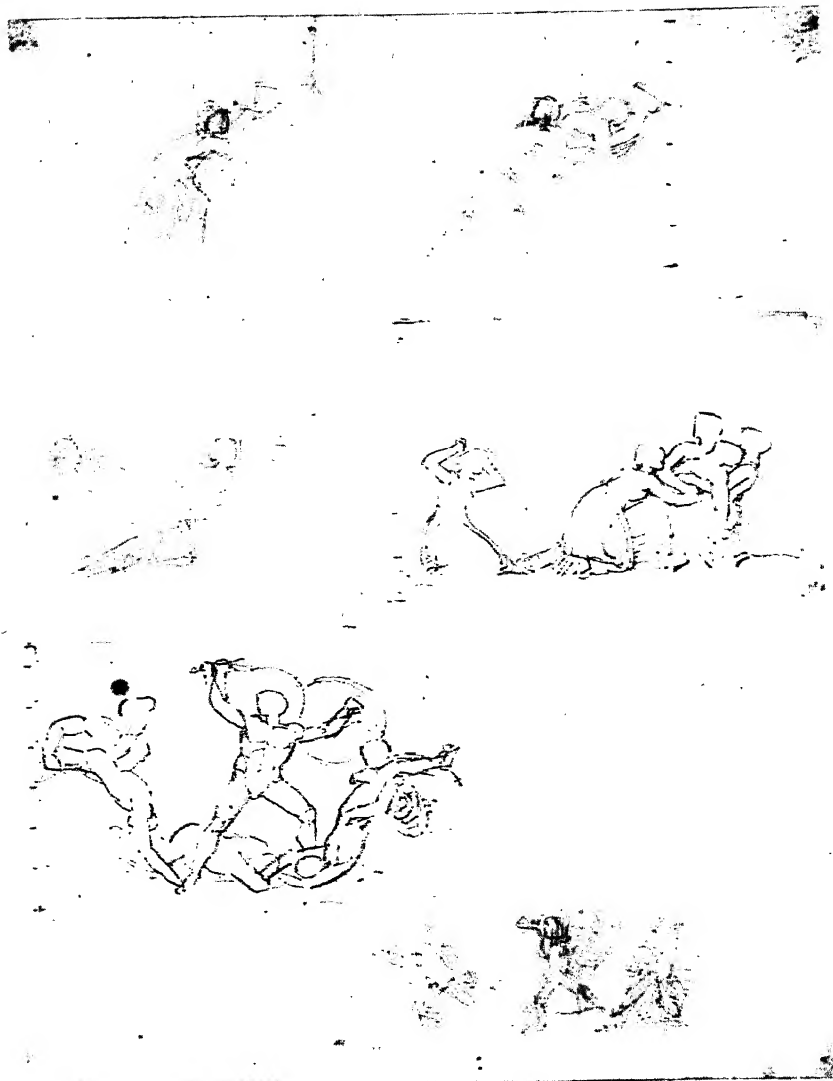
## JOHN FLAXMAN

Flaxman's return to England, is well described in another letter from Flaxman to Romney :

"ROME, *April 15th*, 1790.

"DEAR SIR,

"I take the advantage of Mr. Bunce's return to England, to repeat my thanks to you for the many singular instances of friendship I have received from your kindness ; and I hope you will believe whatever distance of time or place may separate us, they can never diminish my high respect for your character, and gratitude for your good offices ; and believe me I am equally solicitous for your happiness in all particulars as if I was present to be a sharer in it. Most likely you will have heard before this time that my return to my own country will be delayed two years and a half longer than I intended ; but in order that you may not be misinformed concerning the cause of my stay, I will mention some of the particulars. I had settled my affairs for my departure from Rome, I had given orders for packing cases to be made for the works I have done here, and I had received earnest from the coachman who was to carry us to Lyons, as you know is the custom of this country ; and in order that the time of seeing my dear friends and country might not be prolonged, I refused to execute a bust in marble for one gentleman and a marble bas relief for another. Whilst I was thus rejoicing with my Nancy in the near approach of the time, which would bring us back to people whom



SKETCHES FOR ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE ILIAD.

*Pencil and Pen.*



## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

we loved so much ; all our schemes were upset in the following manner. One morning Lord Bristol called to see what I have done here, and ordered me to carve in marble for him, a bas relief I have modelled here, between eight and nine feet, and near five feet high ; representing Amphion and Zethus delivering their mother Antiope from the fury of Dirce and Lycus ; it is my own composition, taken from a different point of time, but the same story as the group of the Toro Farnese, which you well know. I refused this work notwithstanding the price would have been five hundred guineas, and informed his lordship I could not possibly remain longer here, unless I should be employed to execute a work that might establish my reputation as a sculptor. His lordship applauded my resolution, and immediately ordered me to execute a group in marble, the figures as large as the Gladiator, from a sketch in clay which I had made ; the subject of which is, the Madness of Athamas, in which he believes his wife Ino to be a tigress, and her children her whelps ; when after coursing them round the hall, he seizes the youngest from its mother's breast, and throws it on the ground. The story is in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, and the group consists of Athamas, Ino, and two small children. Mr. Bunce, the gentleman who does me the favour to present this letter, was my most esteemed friend in Rome, both for the excellence of his moral character, and his abilities in architecture ; he was present when that noble



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patron of arts, the generous Lord Bristol gave me a draft in writing for the payment of my work, which I am to receive as I may have occasion for it ; and also when his lordship promised me every assistance and encouragement that I can possibly want. As my friend Mr. Bunce was present on this occasion he can inform you of all the particulars relating to that transaction, as well as every other particular relating to me and my dear Nancy, who upon this occasion has behaved with the most heroic virtue, for when I consulted her concerning whether I should accept this commission, and whether, having settled her mind to return to England she should not be unhappy to remain longer here? She answered, I should be my own enemy if I refused the noblest work that could be offered to a sculptor, and that she should accommodate her mind to my fortune. Forgive my vanity in telling you that I was particularly recommended in this work to Lord Bristol by Mr. Canova, who has done the monuments of two Popes, and other excellent works, and is esteemed here the best sculptor in Europe. Pray remember me in the most grateful and affectionate manner to Mr. Long, and Mr. Hayley : I lately troubled those gentlemen with letters, and I hope they have received them. You will forgive me for not writing oftener and better ; you know how much the studies of an artist ought to engage his mind.

“ My Nancy continually unites with me in earnest



ILLUSTRATION TO THE ILLAD: ANDROMACHE FAINTING.

*Pen drawing.*

(Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.)



## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

wishes for your prosperity and happiness in all things ;  
and I remain,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your most obliged and faithful servant,

“ JOHN FLAXMAN.”

Unfortunately, hope told a flattering tale. The price agreed upon for the *Athamas* was £600. But the expenses proved heavier than Flaxman anticipated and the payments on account were irregular and delayed ; so that eventually Flaxman was considerably out of pocket.

*The Fury of Athamas* is now at Ickworth Hall, and does little to justify the time and labour expended upon it (Plate XII). It is a conscientious attempt at the heroic and dramatic, modelled upon such work as the *Laocoon*. But the figures have little substance and vitality ; the design lacks unity and monumental character ; and the drama is tepid. Flaxman's desire to perform what he and his age considered the proper work of a sculptor had led him to a task which in scale and character was beyond his imaginative strength.

But if in *Athamas* Flaxman revealed his weaknesses, in another work of the same period he displayed his powers. This is the monument in Chichester Cathedral to the poet William Collins, for which the drawings at least were prepared in Rome, if not the models and the monument itself. A letter of Flaxman's and a series of designs, both in the British Museum, and the models,

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now at University College, throw an interesting light on Flaxman's methods of work. A committee had been formed for erecting a monument to Collins, of which Thomas Hayley, the illegitimate son of William Hayley and later Flaxman's pupil, was a member. Flaxman wrote to Hayley on the matter, submitting a number of designs for the monument :

“ROME, *July 4th*, 1792.

“DEAR SIR,

“I thus trouble you with your own thoughts for the Honored Bard. I am solicitous that my work may not degrade his memory and I disclaim profit on the present occasion, my first desire is to act with such caution respecting you, that you may not incur any additional expence in carr(iage) or custom house-duty, for which reason I have confined the price of those designs which I think likely that the subscribers will choose between £60 and £70, the overplus I leave for the extra expences, among which I reckon the cutting the inscription, which it would be impossible for me to have done here by an Italian, without the hazard of some enormous blunder which might ruin the work. To get the inscription cut, I advise the following method : let some friend of yours in London enquire of Mr. Bacon or Mr. Banks where Mr. Chapple lives who cuts inscriptions for all the best Sculptors in and about London. He or his son will come down to Chichester. do that business and set up the Monument



ILLUSTRATION TO THE ODYSSEY: ODYSSEUS SLAYING THE SUITORS.

*Pen Drawing.*

(Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.)



## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

at a reasonable expence ; they are men of the worthiest character and of great ability in their way ; in the designs I have sent I have done my best and I may say I have given them thrice the consideration which I ever gave to a similar work ; it will occur to you and other Gentlemen of the Committee, that any of these designs would derive great advantage from being executed on a more extensive scale, but you may rest assured of my utmost endeavours for the price fixed.

“ Concerning Mr. Romney’s casts I have as before-mentioned received the 100£ which lies in the hands of Mr. Jenkins the English Banker there. I have sent a list of some principal casts to Mr. Romney for his approbation. I have likewise begged of my Father to send me an answer concerning them in case Mr. Romney should not find time to write to me and as soon as I have an answer either from one of them or from you whether Mr. Romney approves of the list or if he should prefer any alteration in it, I will immediately lay out his money and send him the casts.

“ I return you my warmest thanks for the hint and kind offer respecting the Monuments of Illustrious persons. I have began a book of sketches of this kind and shall be much obliged to you in your next if you will send me any particular hints pray when [paper destroyed] Committee have determined on the sketch be so kind as to cut it off by sending it in yours, in return I will send a more finished drawing with price and dimensions marked



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publication in other languages followed. Meanwhile, to the order of the Dowager Countess Spencer, Flaxman had produced thirty-one illustrations to the seven tragedies of Æschylus, at the somewhat improved price of one guinea each, twenty-seven of which are also in the Diploma Gallery. They were engraved by Piroli, and published in London in 1795 and in Germany in 1802. Next came 109 illustrations to Dante, done for Thomas Hope. Engravings from these by Piroli were published in Rome in 1802 and in London in 1807. The original drawings are said to be in a private collection ; and there are a few alternative designs in the British Museum.

A group of preliminary sketches for the Homer and Æschylus illustrations in the British Museum and elsewhere show clearly how Flaxman worked. First a number of slight drawings in pencil were made, in working out the main idea of the composition. Good examples are the preparatory studies for *Andromache fainting at the Sight of Hector's Body dragged by the Chariot of Achilles*, and for *Achilles fighting the River Scamander* (Plate XVI). One of these drawings was then worked over in pen and ink or made the basis of a pen drawing, in either case being simplified and made more precise (Plate XVII). From the result, a tracing in ink was prepared for the engraver, to avoid the reversal of the drawing in reproduction. In the illustrations to Homer and Æschylus, the main influence is that of Greek vase paintings, especially in the compositions and in the linear treatment.



THE EIGHT ACTS OF MERCY: "CLOTHED THE NAKED."



## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

That Flaxman studied Greek vases appears from his letters to Romney ; and he may have had access to the drawings made from the vases in Sir William Hamilton's collection, which were published in 1791 by the Director of the Academy of Naples.<sup>1</sup> But into a pagan mould Flaxman poured the sentiments of his own age. To judge the illustrations fairly, the original drawings must be studied ; since under the engraver's hand the line lost some of the grace and sensitiveness which Flaxman gave to it. Even so, failure to embody the essential character of the works they seek to illustrate remains. With the limitations of his temperament, it is hardly surprising that Flaxman failed to express either the tragic pathos or the heroic energy of Homer and Æschylus. Such a drawing as *Andromache Fainting* (Plate XVII) is characteristic. The design is well-balanced, the grouping of the figures skilful ; but it would better represent a young woman of Flaxman's time fainting at the sight of her pet dog being run over than one of the most moving passages in the *Iliad*. So with scenes such as that of *Odysseus slaying the Suitors* (Plate XVIII). The balanced rhythm of the design is again most skilfully contrived ; but the figures grimace and posture, without coming to life, as in a languid dress-rehearsal for grand opera. Comparison with the same scene treated by a Greek vase painter is instructive. Flaxman adheres far more closely to the text, in number and disposition of figures and in facial expression ; but

<sup>1</sup> Doin, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1911, p. 241.

## JOHN FLAXMAN

the Greek gives more completely the sense of heroic conflict. Pope is said to have put Homer into a periwig ; Flaxman put him into a muslin dress.

The illustrations to Dante are a parallel case. The imaginative range and emotional intensity of the *Divine Comedy* were beyond Flaxman's grasp. Its horror and pitiful tragedy, its tenderness and passionate devotion, are alike put in terms of a refined and slightly comic elegance. As Dante and Vergil pass from scene to scene with mild and detached interest, the suggestion is irresistible of tourist and guide supping first on artificial horrors and then finding refreshment in a firework display.

That the illustrations should have attained so rapid and widespread a popularity is not difficult to explain. The enthusiasm for classical antiquity which filled the air was not particularly robust. Rather, it cherished the forms of classic art less as an embodiment of the classic spirit than as means to express the sentimental refinement which was the mark of the age. Flaxman's illustrations corresponded admirably with such aims. His graceful and elegant figures mirrored the fashions of the day ; and he wove them into designs which as decoration always have a certain merit, and sometimes attain high rank. *Morn in her Chariot*, from the illustrations to Æschylus, is a masterpiece of linear pattern. At the same time their appreciation called for no great apparatus of learning ; since their appeal was the most universal of all, the appeal to the eye.



MONUMENT TO LORD MANSFIELD A. 1802.  
(Westminster Abbey.)



## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

It is convenient here to depart from chronological treatment, in order to complete the account of Flaxman's work as an illustrator. After the Dante, his next important production was the thirty-six illustrations to Hesiod's *Works and Days* and *Theogony*, which were published in London in 1817. A few of the final drawings, with some preliminary sketches, are in the British Museum. The drawings had the distinction, though it did not then rank as such, of being engraved by Blake, with whom Flaxman kept in touch all his life. In addition to understudying Piroli in the illustrations of the *Odyssey*, Blake had engraved some of the illustrations to Wedgwood's catalogues, in which Flaxman's designs appeared; and also engraved the plates for Flaxman's pamphlet in 1799, advocating the erection of a colossal statue of Britannia on Greenwich Hill. The Hesiod illustrations are the best work of their kind done by Flaxman; and Blake, better than Piroli, has retained the sensitiveness of line in the drawings. Flaxman's model, especially in the *Theogony*, seems to have been engraved gems rather than vase paintings. The idyllic nature of the subject-matter suited his taste and temperament, and he is especially happy in weaving designs, such as *The Good Race* (Plate VII), from incidents in domestic and rural life. Also, with the call for tragedy or heroics wanting, the response of sentimentality which Flaxman was always ready to give is likewise absent.

Apart from three illustrations to Cowper's translations



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of the Latin poems of Milton, published in 1810, no other drawings by Flaxman were published in his lifetime. Posthumous publications were *The Eight Acts of Mercy*, reproduced in aquatint in 1831 by F. C. Lewis; a set of anatomical studies engraved by Henry Landseer in 1833; and *Eight Illustrations to the Lord's Prayer*, lithographed in 1835 by Richard Lane. Drawings for *The Acts of Mercy* are now in the British Museum and at University College, London. In these Flaxman combined line with Indian ink and wash, a medium which he used less skilfully than line alone. Some of them, notably "*Clothe the Naked*" (Plate XIX), are good examples of Flaxman's power to fill a space; but the figures are lifeless, and the sentiment of most is over-sweet. Primarily, they are designs for reliefs on monuments; and one of them, *Instruct the Ignorant*, representing an old man with an open book on his knees between a young man and a girl, is reproduced on a monument to *Edward Balme*, for which the model was exhibited in 1810. The *Illustrations to the Lord's Prayer* had a similar purpose, the designs illustrating the words "*Thy Kingdom come*" and "*Deliver us from evil*" being used, with variations, in monuments to *Miss Agnes Cromwell* (1800) and *The Baring Family* (1813) respectively. The published lithographs, being based upon sketches and unfinished drawings, do not represent Flaxman's own work. But the sentimentality which runs through them is recognisably his.

Flaxman also made at different times sketches, and in



JOHN FLAXMAN, 1796.  
*Pencil Drawing by George Dance.*  
'Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.'



## WORK IN ITALY, 1787-1794

some cases finished drawings, as illustrations to other books. Some were never intended for publication ; others remain as uncompleted projects. Among the former are forty drawings with a prose commentary by Flaxman himself, illustrating the adventures of *The Knight of the Burning Cross*. These were given to Mrs. Flaxman in 1796 on her birthday, and are now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. According to Flaxman's dedication, their purpose is to display "under the allegory of a Knight-errant's adventures, the trials of virtue and the conquest of vice." The manner of doing this is described in detail by Cunningham.<sup>1</sup> The drawings illustrate their theme vivaciously enough ; but Cunningham's comparison with *The Faery Queene* is scarcely kind to Flaxman. Though these drawings were never published, the existence in the Victoria and Albert Museum of tracings from them suggests that Flaxman contemplated publication.

More in the nature of a *jeu d'esprit* were ten designs for a poem written by Flaxman himself, entitled *The Casket*, wherein were told the fantastic adventures of a Chinese casket given by him to his wife and adopted daughter. The original has disappeared, and our only record is an elaborate description by Cunningham.<sup>2</sup>

Works for which the illustrations remained projects included Sophocles, *Paradise Lost*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*.<sup>3</sup> The drawings for these, in the British Museum

<sup>1</sup> *Lives*, iii. 313-20.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* iii., pp. 333 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> For a complete list see Appendix I.

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and at University College, mainly reveal Flaxman's defects. Sophocles and Milton, like Homer and Æschylus, called for a type of imagination he did not possess. The homeliness and simplicity of Bunyan gave him opportunity; but he was rarely able to express the grandeur and pathos of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Christiana and her companions, like Andromache and her attendants, become transformed into the very every-day young women of Flaxman's family circle.

Flaxman's stay in Italy had had very definite influence upon his work. For the time, at least, his realistic instincts were in subordination; and for the exuberant mannerism inspired by French example he had substituted either a formality based on Roman copies of early Greek work or an elaboration and attempt at dramatic emphasis imitated from Hellenistic work. But that Flaxman had absorbed much of the underlying spirit of classic art there is no evidence. It is doubtful whether he ever understood the Pagan mind at all, so completely was Protestant Christianity the background of his own ideas. Thus, the main service of antiquity for him was to supply a means, a convention, for expressing the thoughts and sentiments of his own age. As a French critic aptly says, "Il prêche l'Evangile sur des monuments et stèles funéraires."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doin, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1911 (1), p. 330.

#### CHAPTER IV : *Later Work, 1797-1826*

WHATEVER their merits and faults, Flaxman's illustrations made him known throughout Europe. While in Italy he was elected a member of the Academies of Florence and Ferrara ; and he returned to England in 1794 with an established reputation.

Immediately, he became busy with what was henceforth to be the main work of his life, the making of funeral monuments, both public and private. The first of these, and one of the most important, was a monument to *Lord Mansfield* to be erected in Westminster Abbey, and paid for out of the bequest of a suitor who had benefited by one of Mansfield's decisions.<sup>1</sup> The commission was given to Flaxman before he left Italy, for he told Farington of his going to Carrara to select the marble for the monument, which cost £600. The studies in pen and ink which are at University College, London, may have been made in Rome ; also the model which is now in the Soane Museum. But the final model was not exhibited at the Royal Academy until 1796 ; and from another reference in

<sup>1</sup> Farington, *Diary*, ed. Greig, December 12, 1795.

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Farington<sup>1</sup> it appears that the monument was not erected until about 1802.

The seated figure of Mansfield in his robes as Chief Justice, which surmounts the monument (Plate XX), is based upon Reynolds' portrait, and has vigour and dignity. The figures of Justice and Learning, however, which flank the pedestal, are conventional and lifeless; and the different parts of the monument lack that intimate and inevitable relation which is necessary for the massive architectural effect at which Flaxman aimed. One claim to notoriety the Mansfield monument possesses, of being one of the first "insulated"—to use Sir John Soane's word—monuments in England, designed to stand alone without reference to its architectural surroundings. To the lamentable effects of the fashion so begun, Westminster Abbey is standing evidence. Another peculiarity, in relation to Flaxman's other work, is that the head of Mansfield was carried out by Flaxman himself, though the rest of the figure was worked upon by Smith and other stone-carvers.<sup>2</sup> Flaxman's usual practice was to prepare a model, which was rarely more than half-size, and leave the rest to workmen. To this method of working is largely due Flaxman's failure to secure unity in his larger monuments. Parts which in a small model look coherent fall apart when enlargement takes place. An artist has to think in terms of the scale on which the finished work is

<sup>1</sup> Farington, *Diary*, September 6, 1804.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, May 14, 1806.



MONUMENT TO MISS MARY LUSHINGTON, 1800.





## LATER WORK, 1797-1826

to be carried out, and this Flaxman often failed to do. Moreover, in the process of enlargement, the accents and emphasis which in the model gave life and character were generally smoothed away by the carver's chisel.

In 1795 Flaxman was still "Young Flaxman" to Farington; but the Mansfield monument marks his acceptance as one of the leading sculptors of the day, recognised by his election as A.R.A. in 1797 (Plate XXI) and as R.A. in 1800, and by his appointment in 1810 as the first Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy. As he passes through the pages of Farington's *Diary* and Crabb Robinson's *Reminiscences*, the character takes shape of a man with a high sense of duty, singularly hard-working, simple and regular in his life, universally esteemed and respected. He conscientiously took his part in the administration of the affairs of the Royal Academy, but never lent himself to the baser and more selfish intrigues of which Farington's pages are full. In particular, no sign appears of that petty jealousy of contemporaries which greater artists sometimes displayed. His recorded opinions on the work of Banks, Rossi, and Bacon are both just and discerning; and he was always ready to give younger men help and advice. It is significant that on his death he left only £4,000, while Chantrey left £150,000.<sup>1</sup> Neither lack of work nor personal extravagance was the cause of this; rather, generosity and indifference to financial gain.

<sup>1</sup> Crabb Robinson, note written in 1851 to entry December 7, 1819.

## JOHN FLAXMAN

Crabb Robinson gives an interesting glimpse of him as he appeared at an Academy Banquet in 1822<sup>1</sup> :

“He was seated between Cabinet Ministers ! Such a man to be placed near and to be expected to hold converse with Lord Liverpool and the Marquis of Londonderry, the Duke of Wellington and Chateaubriand ! A greater contrast cannot be conceived than between an artist absorbed in his art, of the simplest manners, the purest morals, incapable of intrigue or artifice, a genius in his art, of pious feelings and an unworldly spirit, and a set of statesmen and courtiers ! ”

Flaxman's lectures as Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, delivered at intervals between 1810 and 1826, are further evidence of his outlook and character. As archæology and history they are almost worthless, and as a guide to practice equally so ; their main interest lies in the revealing of Flaxman's ideals with regard to sculpture, and the catholicity of his taste. The bias is always in favour of Hellenistic and Greco-Roman work, which is regarded as the culminating phase of a long evolution, and so providing a standard for all time. Thus Egyptian and Greek sculpture before Pheidias receive little attention. But, better than most critics of his time, Flaxman understood and appreciated medieval sculpture, despite being familiar only with English work. But he paid full tribute to the beauty and historical significance of the sculpture at Wells and Westminster,

<sup>1</sup> *Diary and Reminiscences*, May 7, 1822.



MONUMENT TO MISS CROMWELL: "COME, THOU BLESSED."  
(Chichester Cathedral.)



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and may justly be regarded as a herald of the Gothic Renaissance in England. Similarly, he praised with understanding the sculptors of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy ; and this, joined to the evidence given by his sketch-book of a liking for early Italian painting, makes him a pioneer in the study of early Italian art.

At the same time, the defects which marked his character in early life persisted and developed. His mind set early ; and a difficulty in absorbing new ideas and an imperviousness to argument increased with age. He had nothing in him of Turner's spirit of restless inquiry and passion for experiment. It is characteristic that when called before the Committee of 1815 which was considering the question of acquiring the Elgin marbles, his sense of justice made him describe the marbles as "the most excellent things of the kind he had ever seen." But he went on to say that "he preferred the Apollo Belvedere to the Theseus." Standards set by the study of Greco-Roman work would not yield to the impact of the genius of Pheidias. Moreover, his equable and serene temper carried with it an inability to catch fire, and to lose himself in the passion for creation. A timid mysticism inspired by Swedenborg, which included a belief in ghosts, did nothing to supply such imaginative fire as enabled Blake to create and people new worlds. Flaxman thought by conscious effort to infuse into his work emotions foreign to him. But he lacked a sense of humour and consequently of self-criticism ; so that his attempts at the tragic

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were apt to result only in the sentimental ; and at the heroic, in bombast.

These elements in Flaxman's character—his industry, his fixity of ideas, his imaginative poverty, his tendency to lapse into the sentimental or melodramatic—all to some extent found expression in his later work. The influences which had shaped him as an artist continued to operate in varying degrees. Sometimes realistic and domestic instincts were uppermost ; sometimes reminiscences of French eighteenth-century elegance and artificiality appear ; sometimes classic influence is in the ascendant. To describe this later work year by year would be wearisome and unprofitable. His illustrations to books after his return from Rome have already been discussed ; it remains therefore to consider his sculpture.

His monuments to the dead fall into the two classes of public and private. The age was one of massive and grandiose tributes to departed greatness ; and it is interesting to find Flaxman in 1796 proposing to address a letter to the President and Council of the Royal Academy on the subject of not allowing monuments to be placed at random in St. Paul's, Covent Garden, which was then rebuilding.<sup>1</sup> In the event Flaxman's contributions to the stream of memorials was no less grandiose and misplaced than that of others. Except in the case of single figures upon pedestals, Flaxman generally adhered to the pattern of the Mansfield monument. This in its turn, save that

<sup>1</sup> Farington, *Diary*, ed. Greig, 1796, p. 162.

MARY, WIFE OF THE LATE MRS. BARING, DIED THE 17<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER 1812.  
AGED 1 YEAR.

ALSO

OUR DAUGHTER OF MR THOMAS BARING BARE  
WIFE DIED THE 17<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER 1812.  
AGED 1 YEAR.

OUR ONLY SON OF FRANCIS BARING ESQ<sup>r</sup>  
DIED THE 8<sup>TH</sup> OF MAY 1855  
AGED 15 MONTHS.

OUR ONLY WIFE OF FRANCIS BARING ESQ<sup>r</sup>  
DIED THE 25<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 1856.  
AGED 55 YEARS.



MONUMENT TO THE BARING FAMILY: "THY WILL BE DONE"  
Micheildene Church, Hants.





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it is free standing, is based upon the monuments of the eighteenth century, especially those of Roubiliac. The figure of the deceased, usually in uniform or official robes, was made the main feature, surrounded by female figures symbolising appropriate virtues or proclaiming the deceased's fame ; while on or round the pedestal or plinth on which the group was placed, appropriate incidents were represented or emblems scattered. Typical examples are the monument to *Captain Montague* in Westminster Abbey, and those in St. Paul's to *Lord Howe*, *Captain Miller*, and *Nelson*. Even more clearly than the Mansfield monument, these and similar works reveal Flaxman's weaknesses. The individual figures lack character and vitality, and rarely form a unified and coherent group ; while the attempt to bring together realistic portrait-statues with idealised symbolic figures not only makes dramatic unity almost impossible, but sometimes becomes ludicrous. This last difficulty Flaxman occasionally surmounted by practically eliminating the figure of the deceased, as in the monument in Leeds Parish Church to *Captains Walker and Beckett* (1811) and in the projected monument to *Captains Riou and Mosse* for St. Paul's.<sup>1</sup> In the latter, the ingenious idea is adopted of introducing medallion portraits, held by one of the allegorical figures.

Another type of monument which Flaxman aspired to produce was for public places. His first bid for such

<sup>1</sup> Model in the Soane Museum dated 1801.

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a commission was in 1799, arising out of the appointment of a Committee, presided over by the Duke of York, to consider the erection of a monument to commemorate British victories. Flaxman addressed an open letter to the Committee, urging the erection of a colossal statue of *Britannia* on the top of Greenwich Hill, which would be framed by the domes of the Hospital when seen from the river. A model for this was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1801, probably the one now in the Soane Museum. Fortunately, the project got no further than this. The figure of Britannia is heavy and lifeless; and on the scale proposed would have been too large to group well with the domes of the Hospital. It is another example of Flaxman's inability to think in terms of the size of a finished work.

In his statues, Flaxman failed for other reasons. The problem here was not to bring diverse elements into dramatic and formal unity, but to make a single figure interesting; and this called for a combination of realism and expression of character, with arrangement of pose and drapery into an effective design, which has baffled greater artists than Flaxman. His most successful statue was the first he undertook, that of *Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Its troubled history is told in Farington's *Diary*.<sup>1</sup> The commission was first offered to Nollekens, who declined it, and was given to Flaxman in 1803. Lady Thomond, Reynolds' niece, supplied the driving power; lack of

<sup>1</sup> From June 28, 1803, onwards.

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money was the chief obstacle. Some £500 had been put aside from the profits on Sir Joshua's writings, and the remainder of the cost was to be met by public subscription. But the public were slow to respond; and the Royal Academy hesitated to contribute, lest the King should cancel the vote, as in the case of Dr. Johnson's monument. Meanwhile, Flaxman had set to work on a small model, under pressure from Lady Thomond, but this was still unfinished in April 1806. By this time, however, enough money had been subscribed to ensure the carrying out of the monument. The small model was completed; a larger one, half size, was finished, approved, and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1807; and the monument itself was erected in St. Paul's in 1814. Sir Joshua stands on a pedestal in his robes as a Doctor of Civil Law, holding his *Discourses* in his right hand. There is some character and dignity in the head, but the treatment of the robes neither expresses the pose of the figure nor gives any swing or rhythm to the design.

Such limited success as Flaxman attained here was probably due to his having known Reynolds; for his statues of *William Pitt* (1812) and *Sir John Moore* (1813), with neither of whom was he familiar, are still more uninteresting and lifeless. Nor did his skill in this type of monument improve with age. The two large statuettes of *Michelangelo* and *Raphael*, now at University College, London, which were finished in 1826 for Sir Thomas Lawrence, are a dull compromise between convention and

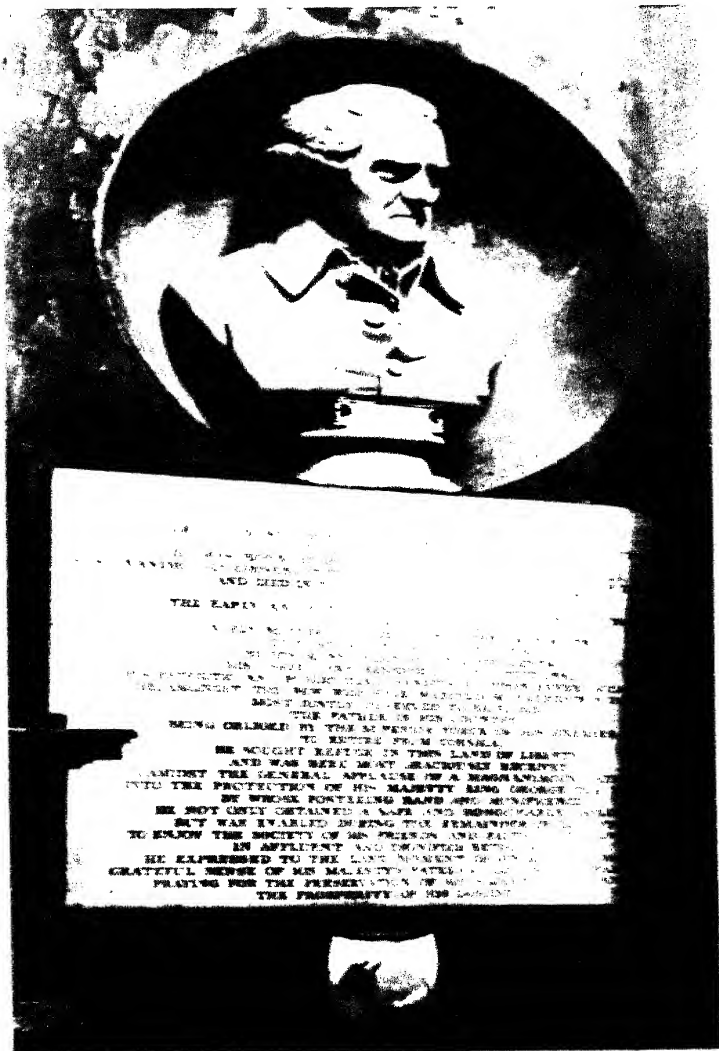
## JOHN FLAXMAN

timid naturalism, from which no sense of personality emerges.

Flaxman's monuments to private people gave more scope to his abilities. In conception and treatment they are far more various than his public works. The most usual type consists of a figure or group of figures in relief, combined with a long inscription, the whole being placed within an architectural setting, generally classic in style. Sometimes the figures are in the round, and then may be set upon a pedestal, as in the monument to *Lady Fitz-Harris* in Christchurch Priory.

Flaxman's large output made constant use of the same motives inevitable ; but in their combination he displayed considerable ingenuity and invention. Broadly, the sculpture on the monuments is of three main types. In the first the figures are used symbolically, to express grief, resignation, fortitude, or similar Christian virtues and aspirations. A simple example is the monument to *Miss Mary Lushington*, in St. Mary's Church, Lewisham<sup>1</sup> (Plate XXII). In this, the theme is that of an angel comforting a mourning mother, the main motive of the design being one to which Flaxman was particularly attached, of one figure floating over another lying more or less prostrate. It is used repeatedly in his illustrations, notably of the "*Dream of Io*" in the *Prometheus of Æschylus*, and of "*Famine and Pestilence visiting Mankind*" in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

<sup>1</sup> Exhibited R.A. 1800.



MONUMENT TO GENERAL PAOLI 1795.  
Westminster Abbey.



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Usually, however, Flaxman was more frankly literary in trying to express the meaning of some phrase or text appropriate to the occasion. Such an attempt is the relief on the monument to *Miss Cromwell* in Chichester Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> The motive of a young woman borne upwards by angels is here designed to illustrate the words "*Come, thou Blessed*" (Plate XXIII).

By far the most ambitious work of this type, however, is the monument to *The Baring Family* in Micheldever Church, Hampshire, erected by Sir Francis Baring over the family tomb. On the sculpture for this Flaxman worked from 1801 to 1813, exhibiting various versions of different parts at the Royal Academy throughout this period.<sup>2</sup> In the finished work the sculpture is intended to illustrate three phrases from the Lord's Prayer. The central part represents "*Thy Will be done*," by a female figure in the round seated in an attitude of resignation (Plate XXIV). Subsidiary panels in high relief represent "*Thy Kingdom come*" by a mother and child borne to Heaven by angels, and "*Deliver us from evil*" by a male figure struggling upwards with good and bad spirits fighting for his soul. The ascension motive had already been used in the Cromwell monument, and appears also in that to *Mrs. Knight* in Milton Church, Cambridge, executed in 1802.

This symbolic type of monument was partly a response to the religious feeling of the period ; but it also made

<sup>1</sup> Model exhibited R.A. 1800.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix I.



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easier obedience to classic example. The use of symbolic figures obviated the need for realism in facial type and gesture, and allowed these to follow classic convention ; while it simplified problems of design, especially those connected with the arrangement of drapery. But with Italian memories fading, classic influence waned somewhat, and Flaxman's interest in the everyday world reasserted itself. This appears in a second type of monument, the main theme of which is a more or less realistic representation of some incident from the Bible appropriate to the character of the deceased. Such is the bas-relief of *The Good Samaritan* on the monument to *Mr. Bosanquet* in Leyton Church<sup>1</sup> ; and the relief of *The Raising of Jairus's Daughter* on the monument to *Miss Emily Mawbey* in Chertsey Church.<sup>2</sup>

This type represents a half-way house to a third, in which Flaxman set himself to represent the deceased in some characteristic occupation or some incident from his life. Here Flaxman was at his best. Material drawn from direct observation of life around him was given shape by the discipline of study from the antique. An early example is the monument to *William Collins*, already described. Similar in treatment and merit is the medallion relief in the monument to *George Steevens*, the Shakespeare scholar, erected after 1800 in St. Matthias's Church, Poplar. In this, Steevens is seated contemplating a bust

<sup>1</sup> Model exhibited R.A. 1814.

<sup>2</sup> Marble relief exhibited R.A. 1823.



MONUMENT TO SIR WILLIAM JONES, 1801.  
(University College, Oxford)



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of Shakespeare. Search for simplicity, however, sometimes resulted in baldness, as in the monument of 1798 in Westminster Abbey to *General Pasli*, consisting of a bust surmounting a large inscribed slab (Plate XXV). In this, the two parts of the monument do not hang together; and Flaxman's inclination to generalise, due to classic influence, has hindered his producing a good portrait. The workmanship is honest, but the result lacks character. More successful and interesting is the relief on the monument to *Sir William Jones* in University College Chapel, Oxford.<sup>1</sup> This represents Jones, who was Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in India, compiling his digest of Hindu and Mohammedan law (Plate XXVI). Here, variety of type and action are well expressed; there is dramatic unity; and the design holds well together, partly from the ingenious use of the banana tree. Equally successful, and more directly connected with Flaxman's studies of domestic life, is the relief entitled *Charity* on the monument to the *Yarborough Family*, erected in Campsall Church, Yorkshire, after 1801. In this, the types have a classic flavour and the drapery is conventional. But the unaffected attitudes of the figures bear the mark of direct study from nature; and the skilful grouping has a spontaneity which recalls some fortunate arrangement in life.

But in the use of material drawn directly from domestic life, Flaxman's masterpiece is the monument to *Lady*

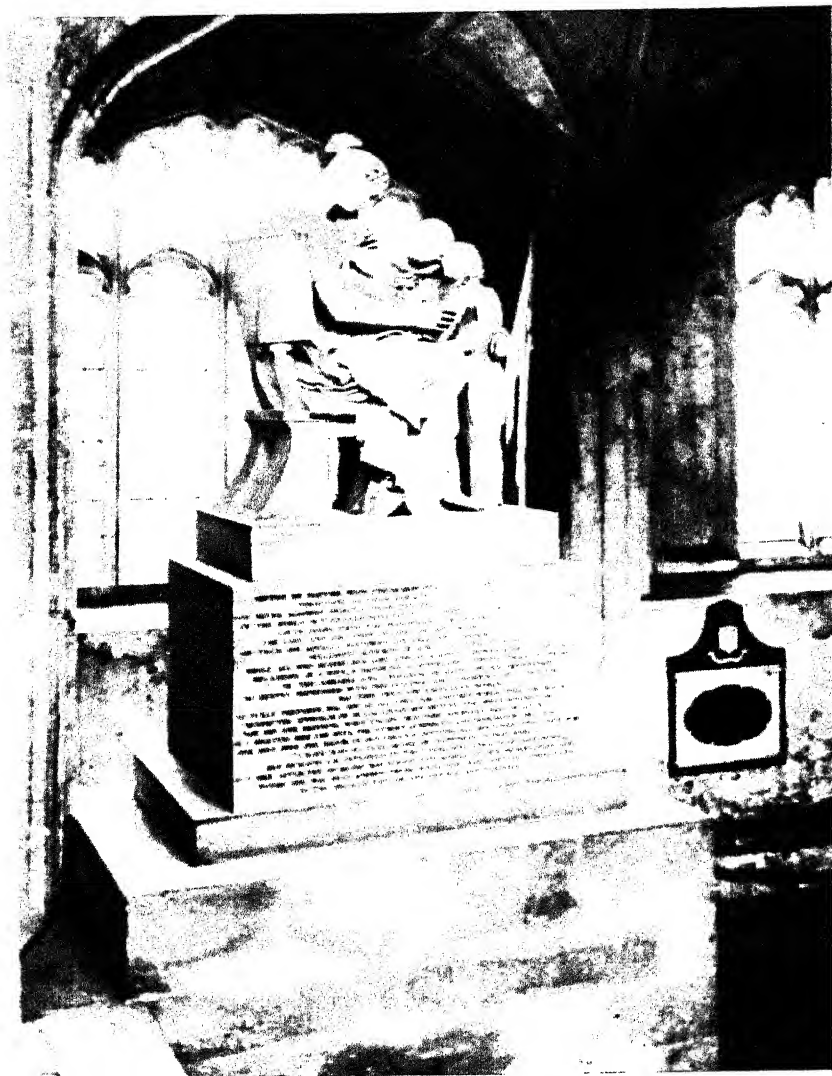
<sup>1</sup> Exhibited R.A. 1801.

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*FitzHarris* in Christchurch Priory, completed in 1817 (Plate XXVII). This was evidently the result of much thought and work, judging from the number of different drawings and models connected with it. The main theme is *Maternal Love*, represented by a group in the round on a pedestal, of a mother reading to three children, one on her knee, the others standing before her. The sentiment here is tender and not overstressed ; variety in attitude and expression is combined with concentration of interest ; and the grouping is effective and dignified. Noteworthy is the treatment of contemporary dress, and its value in creating atmosphere.

The merits of the monument spring mainly from its close contact with nature. Some drawings in University College, London, make clear how closely the idea of the monument, the individual figures and their arrangement, were based on Flaxman's studies from life. The drawings of *The Kiss* and of *A Family Group* (Plates XXVIII and XXIX) are not designs for the monument ; but are typical of the sources from which it was derived and to which it owes its charm.

Another theme drawn from contemporary life, which Flaxman several times used with success, appears in the relief of a monument erected after 1800 in Winchester Cathedral to *Dr. Warton*, Head Master of Winchester. Warton is seated, book in hand, instructing four boys who stand before him. A similar group, simplified and more coherent, is on the monument to *John Lyon*, Founder of



MONUMENT TO LADY FITZHARRIS, 1817.  
Christchurch Priory, Hants.



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Harrow School, in Harrow Church, erected in 1815. In both the treatment of the dress is very happy, sufficiently realistic to give atmosphere, yet not so much so as to be obtrusive. A more elaborate use of similar material is the relief entitled *Religious Instruction* on the monument to the *Rev. John Clowes* in St. John's Church, Manchester, put up in 1820 by his congregation during his life after fifty years' tenure of the living. Here, elaboration has led to an element of conscious artifice, which contrasts unfavourably with the simplicity and directness of the earlier work.

But even when a subject suited his capacities, Flaxman's treatment was not always successful. His instincts were primarily those of a draughtsman and painter whose work is on one plane and meant to be seen from one point of view only, rather than of a sculptor in the round. His free-standing figures and groups are rarely conceived in terms of three-dimensional form; so that, except from one or two selected standpoints, their design is often weak and incoherent. But even in the management of relief he was sometimes far from happy. That nice adjustment between the height of relief and the area covered, which is so conspicuous in, for example, the work of Donatello and Pisanello, is generally wanting. Flaxman's work is apt to present figures in the round uncomfortably attached to a flat surface, instead of arranged in space behind a frontal plane. Moreover, lacking a sense of humour, he sometimes allowed realism in detail to degenerate into the



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ludicrous. A case in point is the monument in Cookham Church to *Sir Isaac Pocock*, who is represented in a boat on the Thames, falling into the arms of his horrified niece, in the presence of an equally horrified boatman.

Though the bulk of Flaxman's later work consisted of monuments, he also produced decorative sculpture for buildings and reproduction in metal, and produced a considerable number of reliefs and free-standing figures suitable for private collectors. The decorative work was the more successful. The two friezes designed for the exterior of Covent Garden Theatre when it was rebuilt in 1809 may still be seen there; though their original arrangement was altered after the fire in 1856, and they can best be studied in the models in University College. In these friezes Flaxman's early skill in grouping which marked his designs for Wedgwood reappears. The individual figures are conventional; but the ensemble is graceful, though unity has been lost in process of enlargement from the models.

In designing for metal workers, Flaxman had the advantage of being able to make his model the same size as the finished article. A relief of *Mercury and Pandora*<sup>1</sup> for a silver vase to commemorate the battle of Trafalgar and a *Vase and Tripod Stand* for presentation to John Philip Kemble on his leaving the stage in 1817 were prelude to the famous *Shield of Achilles*. This was de-

<sup>1</sup> Exhibited R.A. 1805.

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signed in 1818 for Rundell and Bridge, the goldsmiths, who had carried out the Kemble vase, and was based upon the description in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*. Flaxman first modelled the general design, which was then cast in plaster, and finished up by cutting away.<sup>1</sup> From this model, silver-gilt versions were made, which went to the King, the Duke of York, Lord Lonsdale, and the Duke of Northumberland. Some bronze versions were also cast; and plaster casts went to the Royal Academy, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and Flaxman himself.<sup>2</sup>

The shield is undoubtedly a most skilful piece of work, exhibiting all Flaxman's powers of combining many figures into a harmonious, smoothly flowing design which served Wedgwood so well. But, like the illustrations to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it expresses nothing of the full-blooded, heroic quality of the Homeric warriors. Its gentle elegance is more in keeping with the heroes and heroines of *The Keepsake* and *The Books of Beauty*.

Among the pieces produced for private collectors were a pair of statuettes of *Cupid and Psyche* commissioned by Samuel Rogers, for whom also Flaxman designed chimney-pieces and cornices in his house in St. James's Place. The present whereabouts of the *Cupid and Psyche* is unknown; but the models for them in the Soane Museum possess the same dainty grace which marks Flaxman's diploma work

<sup>1</sup> See Smith, *Life of Nollekens*, ed. Whitten, vol. ii, pp. 359-60.

<sup>2</sup> A fine impression at University College, London, was presented by C. R. Cockerell, R.A.

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(1800), the small relief of *Apollo and Marpessa* now in the Diploma Gallery.

More ambitious than these were the *Satan overcome by St. Michael* (Plate XXX) and the *Pastoral Apollo* (Plate XXXI), both made for Lord Egremont between 1822 and 1824, and still at Petworth. These mark a definite return to mimicry of Greco-Roman work. In making them, Flaxman departed from his usual methods, and prepared full-size models, of which the one for the *St. Michael* is now at University College, London. From this may be seen how much accent and emphasis have been smoothed away by the workmen who cut the marble version. But even making allowance for this, the work is insipid. Neither the repose of the Apollo nor the energy of the Saint is convincing; the figures remain lifeless reproductions of studied poses. But the *St. Michael* has at least served one purpose, in that the model inspired one of the best works of Havard Thomas—a monument to miners killed in an accident in South Wales. The motive of the fallen and triumphant figures is the same in both works; but the measure of Flaxman's failure is the success of Thomas in giving vitality to those figures.



THE KISS.  
*Pen and Wash Drawing.*  
(University College, London.)



## CHAPTER V : *Reputation and Influence*

HIS wife's death in 1820 was a heavy blow to Flaxman. She had been an unfailing companion and wise counsellor, whose common sense and business ability had been of the greatest service to him in worldly and household affairs, and had made possible the visit to Italy. Her death, however, did not diminish his activities, which only ceased with his own death on December 7, 1826. He left a considerable quantity of work on the stocks. Some of this, such as designs for a frieze on the exterior of Buckingham Palace, remained projects ; some, notably the monument to *Kemble* in Westminster Abbey, were finished by others.

Flaxman died with his reputation at its highest point, generally counted as one of the greatest sculptors of his age, both in England and on the Continent. Mainly through his illustrations, he was known and admired throughout Europe, particularly in Germany. Goethe, on his way to becoming a national oracle, praised Flaxman's drawings, especially the illustrations to Dante, for the lively invention, *naïveté*, naturalism, and power of composition which they displayed. But he put his finger on Flaxman's limitations in the remark : " Uebri-

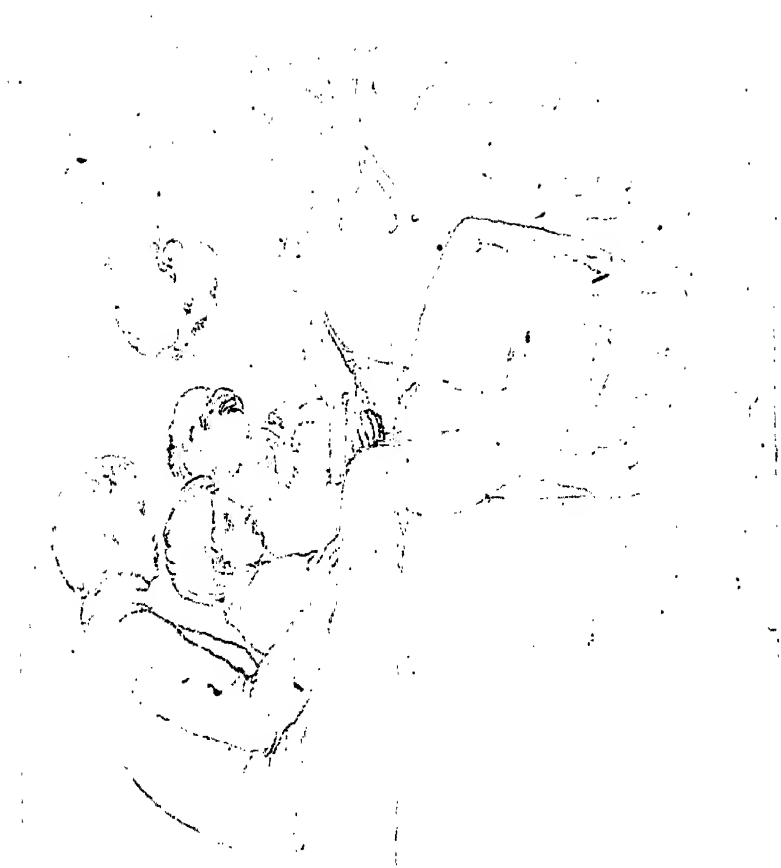
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gens gelingen ihm auch hier naiven und herzlichen Motive am besten. . . . Im Heroischen ist er meistentheils schwach.”<sup>1</sup> A. W. Schlegel, writing in 1799,<sup>2</sup> was both more diffuse and less restrained in praise of the sentiment and feeling for classic beauty which he found in the illustrations. Especially was he enthusiastic over the illustrations to Dante, as expressions of pity, pathos, and Christian sentiment; and expressed the hope that a German artist would arise with a similar power of interpreting ancient poetry. Nor did time diminish the favour shown by German critics to Flaxman. In an appendix to his earlier article, written in 1828 after a visit to England, Schlegel spoke highly of the illustrations to Hesiod, and of *The Shield of Achilles*; though he considered that Flaxman was better served by Piroli as an engraver than by Blake. Similarly, after Flaxman’s death Schorn wrote a series of articles on him in the *Kunstblatt*, then the most influential art periodical in Germany, which was more discerning and appreciative than anything that had been written in England.

The chief reason for German appreciation was the form which the neo-classic revival had taken in that country. As a German, Winckelmann had become almost a national hero, and his teachings were widely accepted. Grafted on to ideals derived from him and based upon

<sup>1</sup> “Schriften zur Kunst” 1788–1800, *Werke*, 1896, vol. xlvii, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> “Ueber Zeichnungen zur Gedichten und J. Flaxman’s Umriss,” *Werke*, 1846, vol. ix.



A FAMILY GROUP.  
*Pen Drawing.* (University College, London.)





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classic art, however, were others derived from medieval Christianity. Especially was this the case with several young German painters studying in Rome, among them Overbeck and the two Schadows; and this group, which came to be known as the Nazareni, subsequently exercised considerable influence in Germany. Cornelius was not one of them; but his art was founded on similar ideas, which through him were transmitted to the younger men of the Düsseldorf school. To these painters Flaxman pointed the way to the fusion of classic form and Christian sentiment which they were seeking; and in their work, notably in the large decorations executed by Cornelius and others in Munich, there is constant evidence of motives and methods inspired by Flaxman's illustrations.

In France, admiration was less general, but more important in its results. David's prophecy on first seeing Flaxman's illustrations to Homer and Æschylus—"Cet ouvrage fera faire des tableaux"<sup>1</sup>—was amply fulfilled. Even at the height of the Romantic movement, the illustrations were regarded as part of the normal equipment of a young artist. "Chacun veut avoir son Flaxman, comme chacun veut avoir son Albert Dürer, son Rembrandt, son Goya."<sup>2</sup>

That Flaxman should have provided themes for Ary Scheffer<sup>3</sup> matters little; but his influence upon Ingres

<sup>1</sup> Doin, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1911 (1), p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> *L'Artiste*, 1833, vi, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Grote, *Life of Ary Scheffer*, *passim*.

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is of some importance. In 1802, after the Peace of Amiens, Flaxman joined in the general rush to Paris to see the works of art brought together by Napoleon in the Louvre. In Paris he also saw Ingres's *Ambassadors of Agamemnon*, with which the painter had just won the Prix de Rome. Flaxman's praise was high. He is variously recorded to have said that "It is the strongest work that the French school had produced for a long time,"<sup>1</sup> and that "I have seen nothing so beautiful in Paris as this work."<sup>2</sup> Ingres always treasured this extravagant compliment and repaid it by high esteem for Flaxman and his work. Flaxman's drawing of the *Chained Prometheus visited by the Oceanides* is said to have been a prominent ornament in his studio<sup>3</sup>; he placed Flaxman among the foreground figures on the right in the *Apotheosis of Homer*; and in a drawing for the same picture he reproduced some of Flaxman's illustrations to Homer on the temple in the background. Ingres went farther than this, however, and used motives borrowed from Flaxman in his own work. The design of his *Paolo and Francesca* is strongly reminiscent of Flaxman's illustration of the same subject; while in *Venus wounded by Diomedes* (1803), *Jupiter and Thetis* (1811), and *Romulus* (1812), the debts to Flaxman's drawings for Homer are evident. It is significant that Ingres mainly borrowed from Flaxman's design and not

<sup>1</sup> Lapauze, *Ingres*, 1911, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Merson, *Ingres*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1911 (1), p. 335.



SATAN OVERCOME BY ST. MICHAEL, 1882.

*Marble.*

(Lord Leconfield, Petworth.)



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from his details—from his strength and not from his weakness.

Flaxman's praise of Ingres also had more trivial consequences. On Flaxman's coming to Paris, David seems to have been anxious to meet him. Flaxman's principles stood in the way, for to him David was "Atheist and King-murderer"; but the insuperable obstacle was raised by David's jealousy when Flaxman's remarks were reported to him. Ingres, indeed, always attributed his failure to win the Prix de Rome in 1799 to the jealousy roused by Flaxman; but the dates make this impossible.

In England, Flaxman was held in high esteem by connoisseurs and critics. His work so completely embodied current ideas and standards concerning classical art, and linked them so successfully to the sentimental outlook of the period, that this was only to be expected. Moreover, he was recommended by the praise of Canova, generally regarded as the greatest sculptor of the time; though this praise was more guarded than at first sight appears. The remark that "His [Flaxman's] works excel in classical grace all that I am acquainted with in modern art" does not go very far; nor does Canova's recommendation to Lord Elgin to employ Flaxman in restoring some Greek sculpture.<sup>1</sup> English artists were more out-

<sup>1</sup> See Farington, *Diary*, ed. Greig, 1806, December 5. This entry does not support the story, repeated by Mrs. Bray (*Life of Stothard*, 1851, p. 220), that Canova, after refusing a commission for a statue of Pitt at Cambridge, recommended the employment of Flaxman.

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spoken. Hoppner, perhaps annoyed by Flaxman's tendency towards airs when a young man, spoke of him with contempt as a draughtsman : " I cannot draw ; but I can draw better than Flaxman can, and his thoughts are all borrowed and purloined from a variety of things which he has seen. He has nothing original about him." <sup>1</sup> This is unfair, though it holds a grain of truth. But there is perception in Nathaniel Marchant's remark, already quoted in part, that " Flaxman designs in an affected manner. He has more science than Nollekens, but his designs are a mixture of the Antique and the Gothic." <sup>2</sup> Fuseli gave high praise to Flaxman as a designer ; but that he was not blind to certain limitations of character appears from his remark on leaving a dinner party to attend Flaxman's first lecture as Professor of Sculpture : " Farewell friends—farewell wine—farewell wit. I must leave you all and hear sermon the first preached by the Reverend John Flaxman." <sup>3</sup> The fine critical sense of Lawrence made him also aware of Flaxman's limitations. His speech as President of the Royal Academy after Flaxman's death was necessarily a eulogy ; but he saved the face of truth by the diplomatic remark that " Though master of its purest line, he [Flaxman] was still more the sculptor of sentiment than of form."

These criticisms show which way the wind was blowing.

<sup>1</sup> Farington, *Diary*, 1797, January 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1806, April 11.

<sup>3</sup> Cunningham, *Lives*, iii, 340.

## REPUTATION AND INFLUENCE

With his death, Flaxman's influence and reputation began to wane. His pupils were few and undistinguished, the most prominent being E. H. Baily, R.A. ; and he left no group of followers. Moreover, the Romantic movement both in literature and painting was in full swing, and neo-classicism was at a discount. He may, however, rank as a minor influence in the development of Pre-Raphaelite ideas, since he figures among the inferior deities in the list of immortals drawn up by Rossetti at a studio meeting with Millais and Holman Hunt.<sup>1</sup> Probably, Flaxman's medieval tastes and tendencies recommended him to the Brotherhood's notice. Certainly, the slender, somewhat affected and emasculate grace of the figures in his illustrations is paralleled in the work of such followers of the Pre-Raphaelites as Burne-Jones and Walter Crane.

Yet, though posterity has not endorsed the verdict of contemporaries, Flaxman's work deserves study both on its merits and for its place in the history of English art. He was a pattern of diligence whose work was the centre of his life, and whose only lapses from artistic probity were due mainly to the sense of duty which bade him undertake work beyond his powers. Financial temptation and petty intrigue left him undisturbed ; and he was always ready to put his talents at the service of a cause which seemed to him worthy. His relations with Wedgwood are of particular interest. One of the most important problems of to-day is that of breaking down the

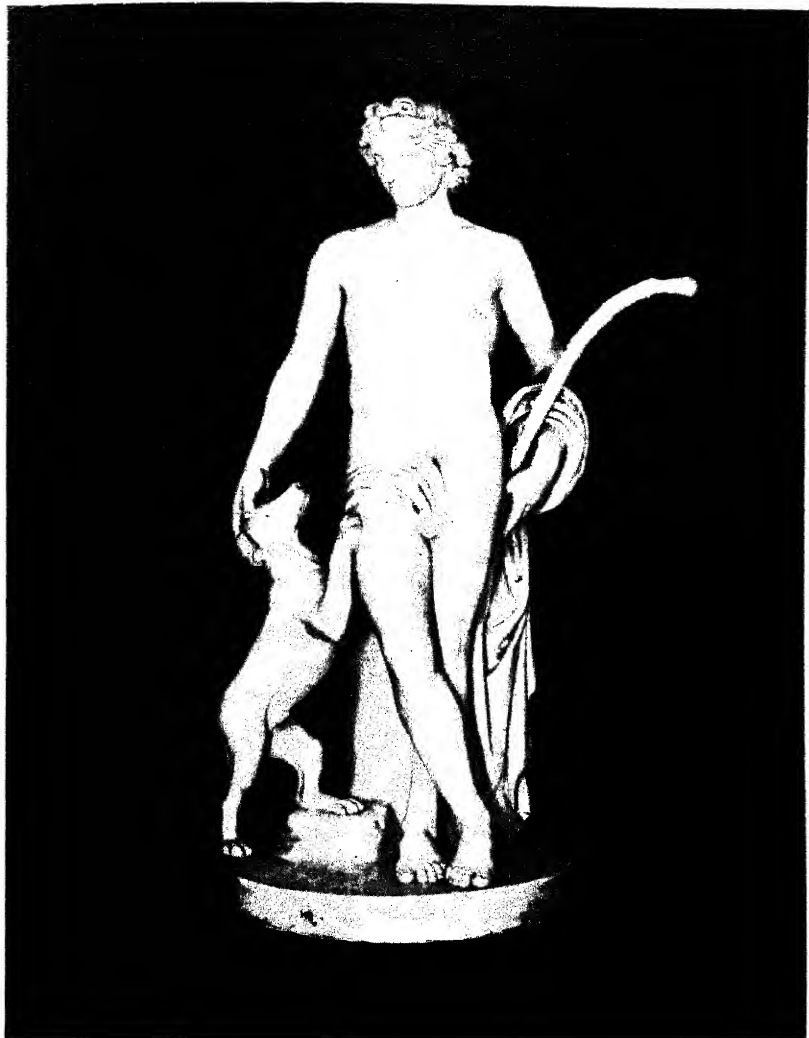
<sup>1</sup> Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, i, 159.



## JOHN FLAXMAN

separation between artist and manufacturer brought about by machinery, and so reintegrating art and industry. In his work for a pioneer of large-scale production, Flaxman's readiness to accept his employer's suggestions, and his skill in adapting his designs to the technical processes of the potter, are a lesson to artists ; just as Wedgwood's high standard of taste and craftsmanship, and tireless search for new ideas, are a lesson to manufacturers. Historically, Flaxman is of importance since he embodies the ideals of neo-classicism more completely than any other English artist. As expressed by him, these ideals lost their austerity, and acquired an English character ; but their expression served as a passport to consideration on the Continent, and gave him a reputation and influence abroad rare among English artists.

Yet for all his virtues, Flaxman lacked the quality of creative imagination which could have made the products of his industry into new and living things. He was a child and a reflection of his age. That age gave to his art its meaning ; and with its passing, the main significance of his art passed also.



PASTORAL APOLLO, 1824.

*Marble.*

(Lord Leconfield, Petworth.)



# APPENDIX I

## LIST OF WORK

### A. SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

*Note.*—The following list of Flaxman's work does not claim to be exhaustive. But it brings together the material from the chief published and some unpublished sources, checked and expanded by personal investigation and inquiries. Many of the works mentioned have either disappeared or not been identified. The dates given are the nearest to the completion of the work which could be ascertained.

#### EARLY WORK, 1746-1787

*Six Drawings, in Black Chalk, of Classical Subjects.*

Commissioned from Flaxman while a boy by Mr. Crutchley of Sunning Hill Park (Jeremiah Crutchley, M.P. for Horsham, one of Henry Thrale's executors). Each about 24 inches high. (Described by Cunningham, *Lives*, vol. iii, p. 281.)

1767 *Large model of Hercules.* Plaster. Exhib. Free Society of Artists (115).

*Large model of Omphale.* Plaster. Exhib. Free Society (116).

1768 *A figure of Minerva.* Exhib. Free Society (95).

*Bust of Rev. Mr. Whitfield.* Exhib. Free Society (96).

*Bust of a gentleman.* Exhib. Free Society (97).

*Death of Julius Cæsar,* bas-relief. Exhib. Society of Artists (147).

## LIST OF WORK

- Model in wax of *The Marquis of Granby*. Exhib. Society of Artists (148).
- 1769 Model of *The Assassinating of Julius Cæsar*. Exhib. Free Society (95).
- 1770 *Portrait of a gentleman*: a model. Exhib. R.A. (80).  
*Portrait of a gentleman*: a model in wax. Exhib. R.A. (81).  
 A figure of *Neptune*: a model in wax. Exhib. R.A. (82).
- 1771 *Four portraits*: models in wax. Exhib. R.A. (70). These may have included the portrait of Flaxman himself, and the two of his sister, laughing and crying, now in the collection of Mrs. Wedgwood, Cheadle, Staffs.
- 1772 *Figure of a child*, in wax. Exhib. R.A. (86). (Probably "Mary Ann Flaxman as a child" in Victoria and Albert Museum.)  
*Bust of a gentleman*, model in terra-cotta. Exhib. R.A. (87).  
*Figure of History*. Exhib. R.A. (85).
- 1773 *Vestal*, in basso-relievo. Exhib. R.A. (105).  
*Figure of The Grecian Comedy*. Exhib. R.A. (104).
- 1775 *A portrait*, in wax. Exhib. R.A. (119).
- 1777 A model in clay of *Pompey after his defeat at Pharsalia*. Exhib. R.A. (122).  
 A model of *Agrippina after the Death of Germanicus*. Exhib. R.A. (123).  
*Portrait of a lady*, in wax. Exhib. R.A. (124).
- 1778 *Hercules tearing his Hair after having put off the poisoned shirt given him by Dejanira*: a model in terra-cotta. Exhib. R.A. (108).  
*A portrait*, in wax. Exhib. R.A. (109).
- 1779 *Self-portrait*: wax medallion. Victoria and Albert Museum. Signed and dated. Derived from a drawing, also signed and dated 1779, at University College, London. Casts in Soane Museum and at University College, Lon-

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

don. Probably the medallion self-portrait which Wedgwood contemplated reproducing in 1779.

*Portrait*, in terra-cotta. Exhib. R.A. (No. 91). Possibly from the above medallion.

- 1780 Sketch for a monument to *Chatterton*. Exhib. R.A. (453). Never erected. The monument now in the churchyard of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, is a poor work of later date by another hand.

*After* 1780 Monument to *Mrs. Jane Smith*, d. 1780. Chichester Cathedral. With relief of seated mourning male figure, holding fasces, within a semi-circular moulding.

- 1781 *Portrait*, in wax. Exhib. R.A. (272).

*Acis and Galatea*: a bas-relief. Exhib. R.A. (475).

*Death of Julius Cæsar*: a bas-relief. Exhib. R.A. (476).

- c. 1781 Sculptured ornaments and busts of *William Hayley* and *Romney* for the decoration of William Hayley's house at Eartham. (See Gilchrist, *Blake*, i, p. 166.) The bust of Hayley in the Soane Museum may be a cast from the above.

- 1782 Bust of *Mercury*. Exhib. R.A. (515). (May be the model used by Wedgwood and reproduced in black basalt.)

- 1783 *Model of a monument*. Exhib. R.A. (403).

1784. Monument to *Mrs. Morley and her child*. Gloucester Cathedral. Small model at University College, London, differing in detail from the finished work. Perhaps the monument exhib. R.A. 1784 (508), mentioned below.

*Alexander the Great*, in marble. For Mr. Knight, of Portland Place. Wolverley Hall, Worcestershire (?).

A tomb to the memory of *Rousseau*. Portland Stone. Erected on estate of Mr. Fierville at Stanmore.

*Monument of a lady* who died a short time before her child. (Perhaps to Mrs. Morley, above.) Exhib. R.A. (508).

*Bust of a gentleman*. Exhib. R.A. (519).

## LIST OF WORK

- 1785 *Bust of a gentleman*. Exhib. R.A. (639).  
 1785-6 Monument to the *Rev. Thomas Ball*, d. 1770, and *Mary*, his wife, d. 1783. Chichester Cathedral. Model of relief exhib. R.A. 1785 (486) as "An Angel comforting a mourner; a monumental sketch." Perhaps from a model at University College, London.  
 1786 *An Angel comforting a Widow*: a monumental bas-relief in marble. Exhib. R.A. (579). Probably the finished version of the relief for the Ball monument.  
 1787 *Venus and Cupid*. For Mr. Knight of Portland Place. Wolverley Hall, Worcestershire (?). Probably the *Venus and Cupid* exhibited R.A. 1787 (665).

### WORK FOR WEDGWOOD, 1775-1787

#### I. Work known from Signature or Documents to be by Flaxman:

- 1775 *Tablet for a chimney-piece* (unidentified).  
 Medallion portraits of *Mr. (Sir Joseph) Banks*, *Dr. Solander*.  
 1776 *Large bas-reliefs for chimney-pieces* (unidentified).  
 1777 *Six Muses* (to complete the set of which *Apollon* and four *Muses* were modelled in 1775).  
 Models of the *English Poets*.  
 1778 Bas-relief of *Lord Chatham*.  
 Relief of *The Dancing Hours*.  
 Relief of *Cupids and Goat* (also known as *A Sacrifice to Hymen*. From design by Cipriani, as companion to *The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche*, taken from an antique gem.)  
 Relief of *Triumph of Ariadne*.  
 Relief of *Apotheosis of Homer*. (From the antique: now generally known as *The Crowning of a Kitharist*.)  
 Relief of *Apotheosis of Hesiod*.

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- 1779 *Medallion self-portrait*, in wax. Probably the wax medallion now in Victoria and Albert Museum. The contemplated reproduction was apparently never made.  
Portrait of *Mr. Banks*, modelled in clay (probably a bust).
- 1781 Medallion portraits of *King and Queen of Sicily*, and of *Mr. Hilditch*.
- 1782 Reliefs of groups of children :  
 (1) *Blind Man's Buff*.  
 (2) *A Game of Marbles*.  
 (3 and 4) *Triumph of Cupid*.  
 Two flower-pots.  
 Medallion portraits of *Hippocrates*, *De Ruyter*, *Duke of Russia*.  
 Plaster cornice for saloon at Etruria Hall.  
 Drawing of marble work for a stove.  
 Dessert table statue, representing the *Earth* (unidentified).
- 1783 Two drawings of *Crests*, *an Owl*, and *a Griffin's Head*.  
 Medallion portraits of *Mr. (Sir John) Herschel*, *Dr. Buchan*.  
 Portrait of an *Officer*, from a print, for a ring.  
 Drawing of a *Crest*, *Cap of Liberty*, and *a Flame*.  
 Figure of a *Fool* for chess.  
 Drawing of the *Crest and Arms of Sir N. Nugent*.
- 1784 Medallion portraits of *Captain Cook*, *C. Jenkinson (Earl of Liverpool)*, *Dr. Johnson*.  
 Bas-relief of *Boys*, in wax (unidentified).  
 Drawings for the *Manufacturers' Arms* (arms, never used, for the General Chamber of Manufacturers).  
 Drawings for vase bas-reliefs and for chessmen.  
 Relief of *Veturia and Volumnia entreating Coriolanus*.
- 1785 Medallion portraits of *Warren Hastings*, *King of Sweden* (*Gustavus III*), *Mr. and Mrs. Meerman*.  
 Drawing of chessmen.  
 Drawing of a lamp and stand.



## LIST OF WORK

Drawings of chimney-pieces.

Drawings of mouldings.

Drawing of an arm and olive branch.

Drawing of an oak branch for the border of a plate.

(?) Relief of *Apotheosis of Vergil*. (Perhaps the unnamed relief which is compared with the *Apotheosis of Homer and Hesiod* in a letter from Flaxman to Wedgwood, December 13, 1785.)

1787 Relief of *Peace preventing Mars from bursting open the Gates of the Temple of Janus*.

Relief of *Mercury uniting the Hands of England and France*.  
(Both to commemorate the Commercial Treaty, 1786, between England and France.)

Medallion portrait of *The Queen of Portugal* (Maria I).

Two marble chimney-pieces.

Reliefs of *Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides*.

*Undated*. Medallion portrait of *Thomas Bentley*. Signed I.F. fecit.

II. Work by long tradition ascribed to Flaxman, but not certainly by him :

Medallion portraits of *Sir William Hamilton*, *Admiral Keppel*, *Mrs. Siddons*, *Dr. Fothergill*.

*The Four Seasons* (personified by Cupid in different occupations).

Bust of *Mercury* (a bust of *Mercury* by Flaxman was exhib. R.A. 1782).

### WORK IN ROME, 1787-1794

1788 Medallion portrait of *The Prince of Piedmont* (Victor Amadeus II).

Relief of *The Birth of Bacchus* (from the antique).

(Both of the above were for Wedgwood.)

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Copy of the *Borghese Vase*. For Mr. Knight of Portland Place. Wolverley Hall, Worcs. (?). A copy in clay is mentioned in a letter from Flaxman to Romney, May 25, 1788. This was baked and sent to England, and there worked from in marble (see *Description of the Soane Museum*, 1920, p. 105). Model in Soane Museum.

1790-1792 *Fury of Athamas*. For Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol. Ickworth Hall. Exhib. International Exhibition, South Kensington, 1862.

1792. Restoration of the *Torso di Belvedere*, as a group of *Hercules and Hebe*. Slade School, University College, London.

After 1792 Monument to *William Collins*, 1721-1759. Chichester Cathedral. With medallion relief of the poet reading the Bible. Model at University College, London; also preliminary sketch in plaster. Trial designs and the final design, in pen and ink, executed in Rome, in British Museum.

Undated. *Aurora and Cephalus*. For Thomas Hope of Deepdene.

*A Grecian Feast*, from the antique. Cast in Soane Museum.

Medallion portraits of *the artist and Mrs. Flaxman*. Casts in Soane Museum. Reproductions by Wedgwood at University College, London.

### WORK IN ENGLAND, 1796-1826

After 1796 Monument to *Mr. Bellamy* (founder of the Whig Club). (See Farington, *Diary*, 1796, August 15.)

Monument to *Mrs. North*, 1750-1796. Winchester Cathedral. With relief entitled *Religion consoling a Female Mourner*. Signed. Models at University College, London.

## LIST OF WORK

- Monument to *Sir William Burrell, Bart.* (1733-1796, M.P., LL.D., Chancellor of Worcester and Rochester). West Grinstead Church, Sussex. Two inscribed slabs, between them the arms and crest of the deceased, the whole surmounted by a vase. Signed.
- 1797 Monument to *Sir Robert Ladbroke* (1712-1773, Lord Mayor of London). Christ Church, Spitalfields. Begun c. 1774, finished 1797 (*vide Gentleman's Magazine*, 1797, p. 999). Full-length marble figure of deceased in robes as Lord Mayor, standing on a pedestal, with regalia of City and emblems of the trade of London, against a marble background.
- Three Sketches in bas-relief* from the New Testament. Exhib. R.A. 1797 (1106), (1107), (1108). Cunningham (*Lives*, iii, p. 321) gives the subjects as: *The Daughter of Jairus*; *Comfort and help the weak-hearted*; *Feeding the Hungry*.
- 1798 Monument to *General Paoli*. Westminster Abbey. Bust, with inscription on slab. Bust exhib. R.A. 1798 (1039). Model in Soane Museum. Related drawings in Victoria and Albert Museum.
- A monumental basso-relievo*. Exhib. R.A. 1798 (1047).
- After* 1798 Monument to *Christian Friedrich Schwartz* (Indian Missionary, 1726-1798). With relief of *The Rajah of Tanjore visiting the Dying Missionary*. Drawing in British Museum.
- After* 1799 Monument to *Earl Howe*. St. Paul's Cathedral. The Admiral stands attended by Britannia. On the left Fame inscribes the date of the victory of Ushant (June 1, 1794) on a scroll. Victory stands behind her. Drawings in British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Monument to *Captain Miller* (1762-1799). St. Paul's Cathedral. Britannia and Victory suspend the medallion

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

of an Officer on the branch of a palm tree. Model at University College, London.

1800 *Apollo and Marpessa*: relief. Exhib. R.A. 1800 (1004, Diploma work). Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.

Monument to *Miss Agnes Cromwell*. Chichester Cathedral. Contains bas-relief *Come, thou blessed or The Ascending Spirit*. Exhib. R.A. 1800 (1056). Preliminary and final models at University College, London. Related drawings in British Museum.

Monument to *Miss Mary Lushington*. St. Mary's Church, Lewisham. Exhib. R.A. 1800, as *An Afflicted Mother comforted by an Angel*. Model at University College, London.

Monument to *General Thomas Dundas*. Model Exhib. R.A. 1800 (1005).

*A sketch of a monument for an eminent lawyer*. Exhib. R.A. 1800 (1098).

After 1800 Monument to *Ann, Lady Clarke* (1742-1800). Tewkesbury Abbey. White marble slab, flanked by figures of Faith and Charity in full relief. Model in University College, London. Drawings in British Museum.

Memorial relief to *Thomas Hayley* (1780-1800), son of Hayley the poet, pupil of Flaxman. Eartham Church, Sussex.

Monument to *George Steevens* (1736-1800). St. Matthias's Church, Poplar. With medallion relief of Steevens seated contemplating a bust of Shakespeare. Preliminary and final models at University College, London.

Monument to *Dr. Joseph Warton* (1722-1800), Head Master of Winchester. Winchester Cathedral. With relief of Warton seated with book in hand, addressing group of four scholars. Signed. Related drawing in British Museum.

## LIST OF WORK

- 1793-1801 Monument to *Lord Mansfield*. Westminster Abbey. Mansfield in robes as Chief Justice is seated, flanked by figures of Justice and Learning. Behind, a male figure with a torch variously described as symbolising Truth, Death, and a convicted prisoner. The figure of Mansfield is based upon Reynolds' portrait. Commission given while Flaxman was in Rome *c.* 1793. Model exhib. R.A. 1796 (875), perhaps that now in Soane Museum. Dated 1801. Erected *c.* 1802.
- 1801 Monument to *Sir William Jones*. University College Chapel, Oxford. With bas-relief in marble of Sir William Jones, Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William, Bengal, compiling a digest of Hindu and Mohammedan Law. Bas-relief in marble. Exhib. R.A. 1801 (971). Models at University College, London. Drawing in British Museum. Said to have been designed to go to India. (The monument to Jones in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, sometimes ascribed to Flaxman, is not by him.)
- Sketch for a colossal statue of *Britannia Triumphant*, proposed to be erected on Greenwich Hill. Exhib. R.A. 1801. No. 1037. Model in relief for *Britannia* at University College, London. Model for the whole project, Soane Museum.
- A monumental statue in marble*. Exhib. R.A. 1801 (981). Model for a monument in St. Paul's to *Captains Riou and Mosse*, who fell in the attack on Copenhagen by Nelson, 1801. Signed and dated 1801. Soane Museum. Never erected.
- After* 1801 Monument to the *Yarborough Family*. Campsall Church, Yorkshire. Commemorates Thomas Yarborough (d. 1772), his wife Johanna, their son and two daughters. Erected under the wills of their youngest

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- daughters (d. 1793 and 1801). With relief of *Charity*. Models at University College, London. Drawing, in reverse, in British Museum.
- 1802 Monument to *Francis Dear*. Chichester Cathedral. Upright tablet, flanked by figures of *Faith* and *Hope*. Inscribed 1802.
- Monument to *Mrs. Knight*. Milton Church, Cambridge. With relief of spirit of deceased conducted to heaven by an angel. A replica, except that the upper figure had wings, was in a church at Croydon, now destroyed by fire. Drawings in British Museum.
- Bust of *H. P. Hope*. Exhib. R.A. 1802 (959).
- 1802 (?) Monument to *Mrs. Merrick Hoare*, Beckenham Church. A panel with inscription, flanked by groups of mourners in contemporary costume. Models in University College, London, entitled *A Sorrowing Family*. The marble bas-relief *Domestic Affliction*, exhibited R.A. 1802 (1072), may have been for this monument.
- 1803 Monument to *Josiah Wedgwood*. St. Peter's Church, Stoke-on-Trent. With portrait medallion in high relief above slab with inscription. A receipt from Flaxman for £93 19s. dated September 3, 1803, is in Etruria Museum.
- 1803-4 Monument to *Captain Montague* (d. 1794). Westminster Abbey. The deceased stands on a pedestal, flanked at the base by two lions. He is crowned with a wreath by an angel. Model exhib. R.A. 1802 (946). Erected 1804.
- 1805 Bust of *John Hunter*. Royal College of Surgeons. From the cast of the face presented to the College with the Hunterian Collection. Ordered by the College.
- Monument to *Isaac Hawkins Browne* (1705-1765).

## LIST OF WORK

Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge. Part of this monument, a basso-relievo in marble, *Angels strewing Flowers on the Tomb of a Deceased Poet*, exhib. R.A. 1805 (764). "Three angels in basso-relievo are elegantly designed, but Mr. Simeon remarked upon their not *having wings*." (Farington, *Diary*, 1805, September 13.)

*Mercury descending with Pandora*. Exhib. R.A. (765). Relief for a silver vase to commemorate the battle of Trafalgar. Model in Soane Museum.

*Charity*. Exhib. R.A. 1805 (766).

A basso-relievo in marble, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*. Exhib. R.A. 1805 (768).

*Lead us not into Temptation*. Exhib. R.A. 1805 (770).

*After 1806 Monument to the Rev. Hugh Moises*, 1721-1806. Newcastle Cathedral. Full-length draped female figure, leaning on a pedestal surmounted by an urn. On the pedestal, portrait medallion of deceased. Marble background in stele form. Signed.

1807 Monument to the *Rajah of Tanjore*. Calcutta.

*After 1807 Monument to John Hillersdon* (1747-1807). Leyton Church. With female figure seated, reading a book. Signed.

1808 *A marble basso-relievo*. Exhib. R.A. 1808 (945).

1809 *Friezes for Covent Garden Theatre*. Designed when the theatre was rebuilt 1809. Represent the Modern and the Greek Drama. Models at University College, London. After the fire in 1856, the friezes were rearranged so that the left portion of each was isolated from the rest. Drawings by Archer in British Museum of the friezes as originally erected.

"*Thine is the Kingdom*," an alto-relievo. Exhib. R.A. 1809 (834).

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- 1810 Monument to *Edward Balme*. Yorkshire. With bas-relief, *Instruct the Ignorant*. Model exhib. R.A. 1810 (745). Perhaps the model at University College, London. Drawings at University College and in British Museum.
- Monument to *Josiah Webbe*. Slab, flanked by standing figures of a Brahmin and Mohammedan *l*, and Englishman *r*. Tiger and lotus at the bottom. Model exhib. R.A. 1810 (822).
- After* 1810 Monument to *Sir Isaac Pocock*, 1751-1810. Cookham Church, Berks. With relief of Sir Isaac dying in the arms of his niece in a boat on the Thames. Models at University College, London. Drawing in British Museum.
- 1811 Monument to *Captains Walker and Beckett*. Leeds Parish Church. With winged figure of *Victory*, in high relief, seated upon a cannon and leaning against standards. Model exhib. R.A. 1811 (925). Models at University College, London.
- Maternal Affection*: a basso-relievo. Exhib. R.A. 1811 (929). Perhaps first design for the FitzHarris monument 1817. A relief of the subject is at University College, London.
- After* 1811 Monument to *Mrs. Sarah Udney*, d. 1811. Chichester Cathedral. With relief of a recumbent woman holding a book, under a low arch.
- 1812 Monument to *Marquis Cornwallis*. Prince of Wales Island, India. Model exhib. R.A. 1812 (896).
- Statue of *William Pitt*. Glasgow Museum (formerly in Old Town Hall). Life-size, erected by subscription. Preliminary drawing in British Museum.
- 1801-1813 Monument to the *Baring Family*. Micheldever Church, Hants. Erected by Sir Francis Baring, d. 1810. Includes three groups of figures, illustrating three phrases from the Lord's Prayer:



## LIST OF WORK

- (1) *Thy will be done* : a life-size female figure in an attitude of resignation. A bas-relief of the subject was exhib. R.A. 1801 (961). *Resignation* : a statue in marble, exhib. R.A. 1809 (817). Preliminary and final models at University College, London. Drawing in British Museum.
  - (2) *Thy kingdom come* : a mother and child ascending to heaven borne by angels. Preliminary and final models and drawings at University College, London. Drawing in British Museum.
  - (3) *Deliver us from evil* : a male figure floating in air, with good and bad spirits fighting for his soul. Of this subject versions exhib. R.A. 1805 (761), bas-relief ; 1809 (823), alto-relievo ; 1813 (937), "a monumental basso-relievo in marble." Preliminary and final models at University College, London.
- 1813 Statue of *Sir John Moore*. George Square, Glasgow. Standing figure in bronze, on pedestal. Model exhib. R.A. 1813.
- Monument to *Sir Joshua Reynolds*. St. Paul's Cathedral. Reynolds stands on a pedestal, in a doctor's gown, his *Discourses* in his right hand. Commission given 1803. Model exhib. R.A. 1807 (1902), probably that now in Soane Museum. Erected 1813.
- A Resurrection* : in marble. Exhib. R.A. 1813 (943).
- After 1813. Monument to *Sir Matthew White Ridley* (1746-1813 ; Mayor of Newcastle-on-Tyne ; M.P. for Morpeth). Newcastle Cathedral. Full-length marble figure of deceased, in toga, standing on a pedestal, against marble background in stele form, with helmet, shield, standard, and scales. - Signed.
- 1814 Monument to *William Bosanquet* (1726-1813). Leyton Church. With relief of the *Good Samaritan*. "Go and

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- do thou likewise." Signed. Model of relief exhib. R.A. 1814 (803). Cast exhib. International Exhib. 1862. Models at University College, London.
- Monument to *General John Graves Simcoe* (1752-1806 ; First Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada). Exeter Cathedral. Parts of this monument, figures of a Canadian Indian, and of a British volunteer, exhib. R.A. 1814 (805, 808). Model for the former at University College, London. Drawing in Victoria and Albert Museum.
- 1814 *Model for part of a monument in Chichester Cathedral.* Exhib. R.A. (779). (Perhaps for the monument to Admiral Frankland at Chichester. See below.)
- Monument to *Admiral Sir Henry Frankland* (1745-1814) and to *Mary his wife* (1754-1823). Chichester Cathedral. With female figure signifying *Resignation* (similar to that on the Baring Monument, Micheldever).
- After* 1814 Monument to *William Moore* (1749-1814 ; Attorney-General of Barbados). Temple Church. With white marble relief of female figure mourning over an urn, on grey marble ground. Models in Soane Museum.
- 1815 Monument to *George Lindsay Johnstone* (1767-1813). Westminster Abbey. Figure weeping over a bier with a medallion.
- Monument to *John Lyon* (Founder of Harrow School). St. Mary's Church, Harrow. With relief of a school-master teaching three boys (said to be Dr. Butler, Head Master of Harrow School in 1815, and the three sons of Spencer Perceval). Models at University College, London. Drawings in British Museum.
- Monument to *Mrs. Tighe* (1772-1810 ; authoress of *Psyche*). Ireland. Exhib. R.A. 1815 (900).
- After* 1815 Monument to *George John Frederick, Duke of Dorset*

## LIST OF WORK

- (1794-1815). Withyham Church, Sussex. With figures in high relief representing *Arabella Diana, Duchess of Dorset*, mother of the deceased, and medallion portrait of deceased.
- 1816 *A senatorial statue*, in marble. Exhib. R.A. 1816 (930).  
*A monument*: basso-relievo. Exhib. R.A. 1816 (967).
- After* 1816 Monument to *Nathaniel Marchant* (R.A. 1739-1816).  
 Above an inscribed tablet, a female figure seated holding a medallion with a horse and rider. Signed.
- 1817 Monument to *Lady FitzHarris* (wife of Viscount FitzHarris, afterwards Earl of Malmesbury). Christchurch Priory, Hants. A group on a pedestal entitled *Maternal Love*. Model exhib. R.A. 1817 (1007). Models at University College, London, and in Soane Museum.
- Tripod stand, carrying a Vase*. Carried out by Rundell & Bridge, Goldsmiths. Presented to John Kemble on his leaving the stage. The vase carries an inscription and reliefs of (1) *A bust of Shakespeare, Kemble, a winged figure of Genius*. (2) *Kemble crowned with laurels by Tragedy*. Designed by Flaxman, and modelled by his pupil Bailly (Smith, *Life of Nollekens*, vol. ii, p. 362). Two models for the reliefs in Soane Museum.
- 1808-1818 Monument to *Nelson*. St. Paul's Cathedral. Nelson rests on an anchor, surrounded by figures of the seas. Beside the pedestal, *Britannia* points out Nelson to two boys. Drawing for this part in British Museum. Smith (*Life of Nollekens*, vol. ii, p. 360) states that Flaxman was engaged on this in 1808. Erected 1818.
- 1818 Monument to *Major-General Sir Barry Close, Bart.* (d. 1813). Model exhib. R.A. 1818 (1063).  
*The Shield of Achilles*. Executed for Rundell & Bridge. Decorated in low relief, according to the description in

## SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- Iliad*, XVIII. Silver-gilt, bronze, and plaster versions produced, one of the last being in University College, London. Drawings in British Museum.
- 1819 Monument to *Lady Spencer*. Great Brington Church, Northants. With relief entitled *Family Affection* and figures of *Faith* and *Charity*. Models of the relief at University College, London. Model of *Charity* exhib. R.A. 1818 (1089). Alto-relievos in marble of *Faith* and *Charity* exhib. R.A. 1819 (1199 and 1236).
- 1819 *A monumental figure*, in marble. Exhib. R.A. 1819 (1237).
- 1820 Monument to the *Rev. John Clowes*. St. John's Church, Manchester. With relief entitled *Religious Instruction*. Erected by members of the congregation during Clowes's lifetime, after fifty years as rector. Relief exhib. R.A. 1820 (1063). Model at University College, London.
- Peace, Liberty, and Plenty*. Pedimental group in marble for the portico of the sculpture gallery at Woburn. Executed for the Duke of Bedford.
- 1822 *Satan overcome by St. Michael*. Petworth House. Group in marble executed for Lord Egremont. Model exhib. R.A. 1822 (985). Full-size model at University College, London. Small model in Soane Museum.
- A Sleeping Child*, in marble. Exhib. R.A. (1042).
- 1823 Statue of *Robert Burns*. University Library, Edinburgh. Model in Soane Museum.
- Bust in marble of *John Forbes*. Exhib. R.A. 1823 (1088).
- Monument to *Miss Emily Mawbey*. Chertsey Church. With relief of *Raising of Jairus's Daughter*. Relief in marble exhib. R.A. 1823 (1122). Model at University College, London. One of the reliefs exhibited at the R.A. in 1797 is said by Cunningham to be the model for the relief.
1824. *Pastoral Apollo*. Petworth. In marble. Executed for

## LIST OF WORK

- Lord Egremont. Exhib. R.A. 1824 (1028). A *Pastoral Apollo* was also exhib. R.A. 1814 (753) (perhaps a model).
- c. 1824 Statuettes of *Cupid and Psyche*. Kneeling figures. Executed for Samuel Rogers, and in his collection in 1836 (Passavant, *Tour*, i, 191). Models in Soane Museum. A cast of *Cupid* in Victoria and Albert Museum. "*Psyche* : a statue in marble," exhib. R.A. 1824 (1012).
- c. 1826 *Two bas-reliefs* of subjects from Milton. Models at University College, London, and in Soane Museum. Drawings in British Museum. Apparently never carried out in marble, though one subject was begun in that material.
- c. 1826 *Design for a bronze-pattern rupee*. Obverse : Lion and a date tree. Reverse : Bombay, 1828, in an ornament, with a star. Carried out by a native artist.
- c. 1826 Sketches for the frieze for external decoration of Buckingham Palace. Never carried out.
- 1826 Monument to *Marquis of Hastings* (1754-1826). Calcutta. The marble finished after Flaxman's death under the supervision of his brother-in-law, Thomas Denman.
- 1826 Statuettes of *Raphael* and *Michelangelo*. Standing figures. Executed for Sir Thomas Lawrence. Models exhib. R.A. 1826 (1074, 1075), probably either those at University College, London, or those in Soane Museum.
- Monument to *John Philip Kemble* (1757-1823). Westminster Abbey. Standing figure, draped. Exhib. R.A. 1827 (1127). A bust of *Kemble* by Flaxman is in Soane Museum. The monument was carried out by Hinchcliff.

# SCULPTURE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

## UNDATED AUTHENTIC WORK

Bust of *John Flaxman, senr.* Soane Museum.

Bust of *Joseph George Holman* (1764-1817; actor and dramatist). Wax. Victoria and Albert Museum.

Bust of *Henry Howard* (1769-1847; R.A.). Soane Museum.

Bust of *Nelson*. United Service Club. Purchased by the Club, 1840.

Bust of *William Pitt*. Soane Museum.

Monument to *Lady Shuckburgh*. Model, entitled *Domestic Affliction*, at University College, London.

*Statuette of seated figure*, with pan-pipes. Victoria and Albert Museum.

*Winged Victory*. From the antique. Soane Museum.

For Samuel Rogers, *Chimney-pieces and cornices* for Rogers's house in St. James's Place.

## ASCRIBED TO FLAXMAN.

*After* 1777 Monument to *Mrs. Elizabeth Cleobury* (1718-1777). Great Marlow Church, Bucks. An obelisk with medallion of a draped female figure and an urn. Several models with similar motives at University College, London.

*After* 1788 Monument to *Sir Charles Philip Jennings, Bart.* (1753-1788). With female figure standing and leaning on a broken column.

1803 *Relief over entrance to Temple of Freedom*, Woburn. Ordered by Lord Russell, 1803.

*After* 1806 Monument to *G. Arnold* (1754-1806). Niton Church, Isle of Wight. A female figure bending over a pedestal, which carries a life-size medallion of the deceased. The medallion is attributed to Flax-

## LIST OF WORK

man. The pedestal is signed "G. Rouw, Sculpt. Lond."

- c. 1826 Model for a monument to *Thomas Telford*. Figure seated on a pedestal, which carries a relief of the Menai Bridge.

Monument to *Matthew Heather Quantock*. Chichester Cathedral. With relief of two kneeling figures, mourning over a tomb.

## B. ILLUSTRATIONS TO BOOKS

### PUBLISHED

- c. 1792 Illustrations to *Homer*. Thirty-nine drawings for the Iliad and thirty-four for the Odyssey. Executed for Mrs. Hare Naylor.

Sixty-six final drawings in the Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy. Tracings for the engraver at University College, London; other drawings, preliminary studies, and some alternative versions in British Museum. Published :

Rome, 1793. Iliad and Odyssey. Engr. Piroli.<sup>1</sup>

London, 1793. Odyssey. Engr. Piroli.<sup>1</sup>

London, 1795. Iliad and Odyssey. 64 plates, Engr. Piroli.<sup>1</sup>

London, 1795. Iliad. Engr. Piroli.<sup>1</sup>

Leipzig, 1804. Iliad and Odyssey.

London, 1805. Iliad and Odyssey. 75 plates. Engr. Piroli.<sup>1</sup>

London, 1805. Iliad. 39 plates. Engr. Piroli.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The plates engraved by Piroli for the Rome edition were sent to London. Those for the Odyssey were lost on the voyage, and were re-engraved by Blake, though Piroli's name remained on the title-page.

## ILLUSTRATIONS TO BOOKS

Paris, 1809. *Iliad*. 34 plates.

Paris, 1809. *Iliad*, 2 vols.

Milan, 1823. *Odyssey*. 120 plates.

Carlsruhe, 1828. *Iliad and Odyssey*. 75 plates.

Boston, U.S.A., 1833. *Iliad*.

London, 1834. *Iliad and Odyssey*. 4 vols. 75 plates. Engr. Moses.

Boston, U.S.A., 1837. *Iliad*.

London, 1843. *Iliad*. 2 vols. 40 plates.

London, 1853. *Iliad and Odyssey*.

London, 1857-8. *Iliad and Odyssey*.

Madrid, 1860-1. Complete works.

London, n.d. (c. 1868). *Iliad and Odyssey*.

London, 1870. Classical compositions. Engr. Piroli and Blake.

London, 1879. Classical compositions. Engr. Piroli and Blake.

London, 1880. *Iliad and Odyssey*.

Munich, 1882. *Iliad*. 12 plates. Engr. Preller.

1792-5 Illustrations to *Æschylus*. Drawings executed for the Dowager Countess Spencer.

Twenty-seven final drawings in the Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy. Other drawings, preliminary studies, and alternative versions in British Museum.

Published :

London, 1795. Engr. Piroli.

Glasgow, 1795 (in Greek).

Hamburg, 1802. 16 plates.

Milan, 1822.

London, 1831. 30 plates. Engr. Piroli, Moses, and Howard.

London, 1873, 1879 (36 plates), 1881.

1792-7 Illustrations to *Dante*. One hundred and nine drawings



## LIST OF WORK

for Thomas Hope of Deepdene (*Inferno*, 38 ; *Purgatorio*, 38 ; *Paradiso*, 33).

Final drawings said to be in a private collection. A few studies and alternative drawings in British Museum. Tracings for engraver at University College, London.

Published :

Rome, 1802. 109 plates. Engr. Piroli.

London, 1807.

Paris, 1813. 100 plates. Engr. Giacomelli.

London, 1820. 112 plates.

Milan, 1822 and 1833. Engr. Piroli.

Paris, 1833 and 1835, 1847-55. Engr. Reveil.

London, 1854 (35 plates), 1867.

1810 Three Illustrations to *Cowper's Translations* into English of Latin Poems of Milton. Published 1810.

One original drawing is at University College, London.

Before 1817 Illustrations to *Hesiod (Works and Days, and The Theogony)*.

Preliminary studies, alternative versions, and some final drawings for the thirty-six plates are in British Museum and at University College, London.

Published :

London, 1817, 1879, 1881. Engr. Blake.

Paris, 1821. Engr. Soyer.

Paris, n.d. Engr. Piroli.

*The Eight Acts of Mercy* : (1) Instruct the Ignorant, (2) Feed the Hungry, (3) Clothe the Naked, (4) Visit the Sick, (5) Comfort the Afflicted, (6) Go to the House of Mourning, (7) Comfort the Fatherless and the Widow, (8) Deliver the Captive.

Drawings for (1), (3), and (8) in British Museum ;

## ILLUSTRATIONS TO BOOKS

for (1), (3), and (5), sketches at University College, London.

Reproduced 1831 in aquatint by F. C. Lewis.

Anatomical Studies of the *Bones and Muscles*. Engraved by Henry Landseer. Folio, 21 plates and portrait, 1833.

Nineteen drawings in the Library, Royal Academy.

Preliminary studies in Victoria and Albert Museum.

Eight Illustrations to *The Lord's Prayer*.

A few studies at University College, London, and in British Museum. Lithographed 1835 by Richard Lane, A.R.A.

### UNPUBLISHED

1796 Illustrations to *The Knight of the Burning Cross*.

Forty drawings for an allegory in prose written by Flaxman, given to his wife in 1796 on her birthday. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Tracings are in Victoria and Albert Museum, which suggest that publication was contemplated.

1812 Ten designs for *The Casket: a Poem*. The poem, by Flaxman, told the story of a Chinese casket given by him to his wife and sister-in-law. Described by Cunningham, *Lives*, iii, pp. 332 sqq.

Illustrations to *The Book of Enoch*.

Drawings are at University College, London, and in British Museum. They include "Enoch raised to Heaven"; "The Descent of the Angels"; "The Angels descending to the Daughters of Men."

Illustrations to *The Happy Shipwreck*.

Nine drawings in British Museum.

Illustrations to *William Sotheby's translation of Wieland's Oberon*. Forty prepared. The second edition, 1805, was illustrated by Fuseli.

## LIST OF WORK

Illustrations to *Paradise Lost*.

Drawings for these are at University College, London, and in British Museum.

Illustrations to *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

A number of sketches and a few finished drawings in British Museum, and at University College, London.

Illustrations to *Sophocles*.

Eight drawings in British Museum.

### C. DRAWINGS

Chief collections are in

*British Museum*. (See *Catalogue of Drawings by British Artists*, Binyon, vol. ii, 1900. Additions to the collection by purchase and gift have been made since this date.)

*University College, London*. (See *Catalogue of Works of Art in the Flaxman Gallery*, compiled by Talfourd Ely, 1900. Unrecorded in this catalogue is an important *Journal*, Naples, 1788, and tracings for illustrations to books.)

*Victoria and Albert Museum*. (The collection includes anatomical studies, and a most important Italian sketch-book.)

### D. WRITINGS

1796 Prose description to designs for *The Knight of the Burning Cross*. Never published (see under "Illustrations to Books").

1797 Letter to the President and Council of the Royal Academy, protesting against the removal of art treasures from Rome to Paris. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1797.

1799 Letter to the Committee for Raising the Naval Pillar or Monument under the Patronage of His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence.

## WRITINGS

- 1809 Sketch of Romney's professional character, in Hayley's *Life of Romney*, 1809, pp. 305 *sqq.*
- 1812 *The Casket*: a Poem. With ten illustrations. Never published. (Fully described by Cunningham, *Lives*, iii, pp. 332 *sqq.*)
- 1819-20 Articles on Armour, Basso-relievo, Beauty, Bronze, Bust, Composition, Cast, Ceres, in *Rees's Encyclopedia*.
- 1829 Lectures on Sculpture, 1st ed., 1829; 2nd ed., 1838, with an introductory lecture, and addresses to the Royal Academy on the death of Thomas Banks, 1805, and of Antonio Canova, 1822.

## APPENDIX II

### DOCUMENTS CONCERNING WORK FOR WEDGWOOD

(References are to Meteyard, *Life of Josiah Wedgwood*, 1866, and  
*Letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, ed. Lady Farrer, 2 vols.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, January 15, 1775*

. . . Perhaps Flaxman can model you a good Tablet for a chimney-piece—you know we have not one of a proper size. . . .  
(Remainder quoted in text.) (Meteyard, ii, 321-2.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, July 3, 1775*

. . . Sir Thos. Broughton has two boys at School near London and wishes to treat his Lady with their portraits for a pair of bracelets in our blue and white compositions, but desires to know what the expense of modelling will be to have them full or three quarter faces, and if the modeller would alter them if he should not think them good likenesses. I suppose Mr. Flaxman will be more moderate than Mr. Smith. Please let me have an answer as soon as may be. (Meteyard, ii, 323.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, July 11, 1775*

. . . Suppose you were to employ Mr. Flaxman to model some figures. They would do for Tablets, Vases, inlaying, etc. We have nobody here that can do them. (Meteyard, ii, 323.)

## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD

*Wedgwood to Bentley, Autumn 1775*

. . . I have little to say, only I wish you to see Mr. Flaxman before you leave London and if you could prevail upon him to finish Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, they would be an acquisition to us, and as we shall now make with tolerable certainty any moderate sized bas-reliefs of the composition sent you last in a Conqueror's Province and companion I submit it to you whether we should not have some of the finest things that can be modelled, and originals which have not been hackney'd in Wax and Plaister for a century past, and if you think we should, would it not be saving time to set Mr. Flaxman upon some business before you leave him ? (Meteyard, ii, 323.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, January 4, 1776*

Flaxman at work upon large bas-reliefs for chimney pieces. (Meteyard, ii, 364.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, February 14, 1776*

Quoted in text.

*Wedgwood to Bentley, October 27, 1777*

. . . You may permit Mr. Flaxman to proceed with the Muses of the size he had begun, they will be very usefull to us, and I would give half the price of modeling extra to be in possession of them now, so be so good to expedite him all you can. We have Apollo, Melpomene, Thalia and Terpsichore, so that we only want 6 more to complete our suite. (Farrer, vol. i.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, October 29, 1777*

Countermanding the above order, with particulars of obtaining the models more cheaply.

Quoted in text.

## DOCUMENTS CONCERNING

*Wedgwood to Bentley, Sunday Morning (April 1778)*

Refers to the relief of *The Dancing Hours*.

Quoted in text.

*Wedgwood to Bentley, June 22, 1778*

. . . Mr. Flaxman called to tell me he was modelling a bas-relief of Ld. Chatham in order to sell copies in wax. I told him we should be glad of a cast, and he knew what we should make of it. I do not know what he means to charge other people, but we you know are to pay a price below casts and models. (Farrer, vol. i.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, October 27, 1778*

Flaxman at work on reliefs of *The Boys and Goat*, and *The Triumph of Ariadne*. (Meteyard, ii, 369.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, November 8, 1778*

Reference to reliefs of *Homer* and *Hesiod*. (Meteyard, ii, 369.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, March 20, 1779*

" . . . I shall be very glad," says Wedgwood to Bentley, "to see Mr. Flaxman's head at Etruria and will do all the justice I can to it in my power." (Meteyard, ii, 369.)

*Wedgwood to Bentley, May 8, 1779*

The Italian poets at Flaxmans may perhaps by undressing them and putting their hair in order be made passable. Pray look at them again, and inquire for some notorious heads of foreigners, either in busts, Medallions or prints. The Museum is a likely place, and Dr. Solander your man. (Farrer, vol. i.)

Bill to Wedgwood and Bentley receipted by John Flaxman, Junr., August 21, 1779. (Meteyard, ii, 389.)

Bill for £5 5s. to Wedgwood & Bentley, receipted by John

## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD

Flaxman, Junr., for portraits of their Sicilian Majesties and of Mr. Hilditch. (Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS.)

*Flaxman to Wedgwood, February 1782*

The moulds for the Plaister cornice for your Saloon I will finish and send in a few days. The prices of carving the patterns I have sent, in wood will be as follows, pr. foot. No. 1. 1/3—No. 2. 6d.—No. 3. 1/6—No. 4. 4d.—No. 5. 10d.—No. 6. 1/6—No. 7. 1/—No. 8. 4/-; all these mouldings are for the Saloon. I shall be much obliged to you if you will as soon as convenient tell me how you like the 2 flower pots I sent and if the models arrived safe, I shall also be glad to know if Harpocrates, De Ruyter, and the Duke of Russia had the good fortune to meet your approbation. Mrs. Flaxman with myself hope you will accept our wishes for a continuance of Happiness to Mrs. Wedgwood and your Family, and I remain,

Sir,

Your much obliged and  
grateful servant,

JOHN FLAXMAN, JUNR.

(Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS. 1333.)

(Probably the moulds mentioned are the "7 models for carving from Mr. Flaxman" included in a list of goods sent from London to Etruria by the Liverpool diligence, among the MSS. in Etruria Museum.)

*Flaxman to Wedgwood, June 1782*

Refers to sending a drawing of marble work for a stove made by Mr. Hopkins for Wedgwood. (Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS. 207.)

*Flaxman to Wedgwood, October 28, 1782*

. . . According to the desire you expressed in the last letter you favoured me with I have designed some Groups of Children



## DOCUMENTS CONCERNING

proper for bas-reliefs to decorate the sides of teapots. No. 1 and 2 are intended to go intirely round a Teapot of a Flat shape except where the handle and spout interrupt them. I have therefore made seperate stories for each side, the 1st is Blind man's buff, the 2nd is the game of marbles, 3 and 4 are the Triumph of Cupid, to be disposed in a similar manner on the sides of round and upright Teapots, when you return the sketches to be modeled from, be pleased to give instructions concerning the size and other necessary particulars. (Meteyard, ii, 487.)

*List of contents of a box sent from London to Etruria, December 22  
1782*

Quoted in text. (Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS. 48.)

*Flaxman to Wedgwood*

WARDOUR ST., Dec. 13, 1785.

SIR,

I am concerned I could not send this basrelief sooner, upon which I have been cheiffly obliged to work at Night and now and then have taken a day from some large Monuments I have in hand which are in great haste ; I hope however on comparing this model with that of Homer and Hesiod you will find it very superior ; I shall take great pleasure in modelling Hercules in the Hesperian Garden and I think I can make it equal to Sr Wm Hamilton's Murrhin Vase if you are willing I should do my utmost but then I cannot set an exact price on it untill it is finished. I should also be particularly obliged to you for instructions respecting the thickness—if it might be done as thin as the work on the before mentioned Vase it would be the more perfect and the blue ground might shew thro' the thin parts of the drapery, which several Artists and other Persons of taste have remarked to me is a great advantage where it can be done ; but if it must be thicker you will be so kind to let me have a

## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD

attenn ; your answer when leisure will permit will add to the obligations already conferred on

Sir

your much obliged

and humble servant,

J. FLAXMAN, JUNR.

(Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS. 1337.)

Bill to Wedgwood from J. Flaxman, Junr., for work during 1783 (from July 11), 1784, 1785, 1787 (to August 10). (Metcalf, ii, 485-6.)

(An additional bill dated September 1787, for setting up the two chimney-pieces made in 1787, is in Etruria Museum.)

*Flaxman to Wedgwood*

WARDOUR ST., Jan. 12, 1787.

SIR,

I have the honor to trouble you with my basrelief of Mars and Peace which I hope you will like. I have sent the Model without any mould because I apprehend on second thoughts your people will make a mould better and fitter for your purpose than I can, and it will be some advantage for them to see the taste of finishing before it undergoes that operation, and which will be attended with no more difficulty than the two last wax models I sent, the casts from which were made at your factory. I am going on with the other basrelief and the Chimney piece. I return my gratefull thanks for the kind inquiries after Mrs. Flaxman, who desires her respectfull compliments to Mrs. and Miss Wedgwood and yourself together with

Sir,

your most obliged servant,

J. FLAXMAN.

(Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS. 1338.)

## DOCUMENTS CONCERNING

*Wedgwood to Sir William Eden, June 1787*

... I have modelled two bas-reliefs representing the Commercial Treaty with France. One of these consists of three figures. Mercury as the God of Commerce uniting the hands of England and France. On the other bas-relief is represented the Temple of Janus shut and the door bolted by two caducei; Mars in a violent rage is going to burst the door open with his spear, but Peace arrests his arm and says, or seems to say, that the door so bolted is not to be broke open. I hope you will have received the first pair I made, which I sent by the diligence for expedition, desiring M. Daguerre to deliver them to you. (Meteyard, ii, 563, quoting from *Journal and Correspondence of Lord Auckland*, i, 428-9.)

Bill for £8 11s. 6d. to Wedgwood from John Flaxman for setting up two chimney-pieces. (Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS.)

*Flaxman to Byerley, November 15, 1788, from Rome*

DEAR SIR,

I hope Mrs. Byerly yourself and Children are in perfect health, I feel myself greatly obliged to you for the kind attention you always shewn to me and my concerns both present and absent, the case you was so good to commit to the care of Messrs. Micali & Son at Leghorn for me is arrived safe at Rome with all its contents in the most perfect condition, enclosed in the same box with this, you will find in a small round chip box the portrait of the Prince of Peidmont in wax with a plaister mould it was done here by the order of Mr. John Wedgwood from a miniature. Mr. Webber informed me a day or two ago he had received a letter from Mr. Wedgwood wherein he made kind mention of me and Mrs. Flaxman for which as well as all other favours I am very thankful to him, he also enquired concerning Mr. Deveare and what he was doing, when you write to Mr. Wedgwood you will

## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD

be so kind to inform him Mr. Deveare has been at work with the utmost diligence ever since he has been here on the basrelief of the Borghese Vase in which he has succeeded very well, but it will still take him some weeks to finish and after he has done, I also shall have something to do to it, Mr. Wedgwood will easily conceive as this is new work to Mr. D. he must needs be slow at first especially as he takes so much pains, as a proof he follows his studies well he has already gained the Popes first silver medal for a figure modeled at night in the Roman Academy.—I have seen the curiosities of Rome, Naples, and Paestum and have now got a good Study and shall continue please God uninterrupted in my pursuits and employments here, among which I have been seeking a beautiful subject which I shall begin immediately and finish in the best manner the instructions of the finest works of Antiquity will enable me, and I shall employ all the time I can for Mr. W. If the Custom Officers should take this or any other letters I send to England (in the boxes I send you) and put them in the General post pray charge them to my account, otherwise I beg the favour of you to send the enclosed by the penny Post, Mrs. Flaxman and myself beg Mrs. Byerlys acceptance of our best wishes for the health and of her dear little boys and girls, with the same wishes for yourself.

I have the honour to be

Dear Sir,

Your obliged servant,

JOHN FLAXMAN.

(Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS. 210. Quoted in part by Meteyard, ii, 587.)

*Flaxman to Byerley*

DEAR SIR,

ROME, Decr. 24, 1788.

The information contained in your kind letter of the good health of Mrs. Byerly and your dear children give Mrs.

## DOCUMENTS CONCERNING

Flaxman and myself the most entire satisfaction, and I acknowledge your reproof to have too much reason, that I have been sparing of my trouble in writing to my friends, even to those I esteem and honour but My Good Sir, my situation is somewhat similar to that of Brutus who declared he "did not kill Cæsar because he loved him less, but because he loved Rome more," and I considering the short time I am to remain here find it necessary to employ all the powers of my mind and body on the Laberinth of fine things by which I am surrounded. I am concerned you have not recieved the wax model of the Prince of Piedmont's portrait but the reason I sent you no account of the conveyance was that it was sent in Mr. J. Wedgwoods baggage, I delivered it and the Snuff box from which it was copied into Mr. Jenkins's hands (which he very well remembers) by whom it was sent to Mr. John Wedgwood's lodgings and there packed with some impressions of gems etc. in a box of Mr. W.'s. I understood the letter went by the same means, according to your desire. I sent an account of the money Mr. Deveare has had of Mr. Jenkins in D.'s own writing, you will observe the first column of numbers is of Roman Crowns each of which is value 10 pauls, and the second column is of Baiocco's 10 of which makes one paul. 45 of which Pauls Mr. Deveare recieved on an average for an English £ sterling. Mr. D. is at present finishing a basrelief for Mr. Wedgwood of the Rape of Proserpine after an Antique in the Barberini Palace, there are I believe 12 figures in it besides horses his copy is much in the Style of the fine Antiques, and Mr. W. will be pleased to hear that he makes studies in clay of a larger size for the principal figures in his own time, no man can be more diligent and his improvement is answerable—he desires me to mention the casts from which he models the basrelief he is working on and that he finished last together with any other he may procure in future for Mr. W.'s service, he will send to him when he has compleated his works

## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD

for that Gentleman, unless he desires to have them sooner I am finishing a basrelief restored from the Antique of the birth of Bacchus for Mr. W.—I could my Good Sir send you a deal of anecdote of the Pope the Pretender, etc., and a Miscellanea Antiquitatis of the [word omitted] of Rome but these would be so miserably crammed in the compass of a letter that I rather choose to retail them to you by a winters fire viva vocé, in which I shall be assisted by some learned extracts from my wifes journal, which may be considered as a Geographical account of the distant Countries and wonderful Regions we have visited.—We are extremely happy to hear Mr. Mrs. Wedgwood are in good health and we beg to be respectfully and kindly remembered to them and Mrs. Byerly, and I remain

Dear Sir,

your much obliged freind and servant,

J. FLAXMAN, JUNR.

I am greatly obliged to you for your care concerning Mr. Feirvilles money and I will beg the favour when you write again to inform me if the 12 shillings paid for my box was for the first which belonged to me or the second which belonged to Dr. Bates, and what part of the expence that was, for I am still Eleven Dollars in debt to Mr. Micali for the first box, which I shall desire him to send me an Account of that I may pay it. It is necessary to inform you I recieved 3 Guineas for the P. of Peidmont's portrait of Mr. Jenkins by Mr. J. Wedgwood's order.

(Unpublished. Etruria Museum MS. 1342.)

*Wedgwood to Flaxman*

*February 11, 1790.*

DEAR SIR,

I have received but one letter, I believe, from you since you left this country, and it dated May 31, 1788. As my health

## DOCUMENTS CONCERNING

did not permit me to apply to business at that time, I desired Mr. Byerley to say what was necessary in his letter, which I hope he did ; and as I well knew that the purpose of your going to Rome was to study, and not to keep up a correspondence with your friends in England, I avoided interrupting that study by troubling you with anything that was not necessary, or that could be said to Mr. Devaere himself. I now rejoice with the rest of your friends here, in the hopes of seeing you and Mrs. Flaxman return safe to your native country again, still further improved, and enriched with antique lore from the fountain head of taste and the fine arts.

With regard to the difference in the packing of the first and last bas reliefs sent by Mr. Devaere, I believe I stated particularly what it was, viz. that in the last, the folds of paper were not turned up over the edges, and what was more material, there were no strips of wood fastened over the models, the slates being kept down by screws only, and pressed so tight, that the screws had indented themselves into the slates ; and to this circumstance, with the swelling of the box by moisture, I attribute the mischief. If the slates are level on the under side, or made level with a little plaster, and strips of wood screwed to the box with some folds of paper between them and the edges of the slates, allowing a very little play for the swelling of the box, etc., they will come safe with certainty, without any straw, etc., on the outside.

I am much obliged to you for your kind attention, and the employment of your good taste, in the choice of subjects for Mr. Devaere's modelling ; and amongst them, the last model, the discovery of Achilles, I admire very much, for the spirit action and beauty of the figures as well as the interestingness of the story itself. The history of Orestes is an excellent classic subject likewise, and its being divided into several groupes might increase its usefulness ; but there is one objection which I am

## WORK FOR WEDGWOOD

afraid is insurmountable, and that is the nakedness of the figures. To clothe them would not only be a great increase of labour, but would require the hand of an experienced master in the art, and besides, the piece would not then be a copy from the antique. I know the nudities might be covered with leaves, but that is not enough.

The same objection applies to the Judgment of Paris and the other pieces ; and indeed the nude is so general in the works of the ancients, that it will be very difficult to avoid the introduction of naked figures. On the other hand it is absolutely necessary to do so, or to keep the pieces for our own use, for none either male or female, of the present generation, will take or apply them as furniture, if the figures are naked.

P.S.—To Mr. Devaere.

After what I have said to Mr. Flaxman, there does not remain much to reply to your favour of last month—only I forgot to say, which I wish to do for his and your satisfaction, that the models are not irreparably injured. The figures are many of them, broken, and some shattered and rubbed a good deal, but they may be put together and finished again, though I believe this will be better done in clay than in wax.

You will see that I have no objection to your remaining longer at Rome, or in short to your doing whatever will be most advantageous to yourself, for whatever will serve you the most effectually will best please me.

I am afraid the very beautiful bas relief of bacchantes at the Villa Albani which you mention, will be open to the objections I have made respecting naked figures, but of that you will be so good as to inform me in your next.

(Farrer, vol. ii.)



# APPENDIX III

## PORTRAITS OF FLAXMAN

### SELF-PORTRAITS

Wax medallion, *c.* 1771. Mrs. Wedgwood, Cheadle, Staffs. From this may be the cast in the Soane Museum of a medallion representing Flaxman as a boy, profile left, which is erroneously described as made for Wedgwood.

Drawing, full-face, of a boy aged about fifteen, much resembling Flaxman. British Museum.

Drawing, full-face, signed and dated 1779. University College, London.

Wax medallion, full-face, signed and dated 1779. Victoria and Albert Museum. Casts are in the Soane Museum and at University College, London.

Drawing, signed and dated 1782. Exhib. Burlington House, 1881 (No. 153 (1), Drawings), lent Colvin.

Medallion, profile left, executed in Rome 1787-94. Probably the wax medallion, formerly Falcke Collection, now in British Museum. Casts of this and of the pendant portrait of Mrs. Flaxman in the Soane Museum. Reproductions by Wedgwood at University College, London.

### BY OTHER ARTISTS

By T. Arrowsmith. Miniature. Exhib. R.A. 1798 (765).

By James Atkinson. Pen drawing,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4$  inches, full-length, seated, as an old man. National Portrait Gallery.

## PORTRAITS OF FLAXMAN

By E. H. Baily, R.A. Marble bust. Dated 1821. Exhib. R.A. 1823 (1096). Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.

By W. H. Collier. A miniature after this by W. Essex. Exhib. R.A. 1828 (640).

By George Dance, R.A. Pencil, profile. Dated 1796. Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.

By Maria Denman. Drawing. Exhib. Burlington House, 1881 (81) (Drawings).

By Thomas Denman. Marble bust. Exhibited R.A. 1830 (1231).

By William Derby, 1786-1847 (of Birmingham). Oil on canvas: half-length, 30 × 24 inches. Burdett-Coutts Collection. (Sale Christie's, May 1922, No. 262.) Exhib. Guelph Exhib., New Gallery, 1891.

By Guy Head. Oil on canvas, bust, 28½ × 23 inches. Painted in Rome. National Portrait Gallery.

By Henry Howard, R.A. Oil on canvas, head and shoulders, full face. University College, London. Exhib. R.A. 1797 (281) as *Portrait of an Artist*.

Oil on canvas, head and shoulders, 7¼ × 5¾ inches (pendant to a portrait of Mrs. Flaxman). National Portrait Gallery.

By Ozias Humphry, R.A. Pencil Drawing. Inscribed "J. Flaxman, Esq., R.A. O. Humphry, R.A., del 1778." Formerly John Lane Collection. (The inscription probably added later, as Flaxman was not R.A. in 1778.)

Miniature: as a youth. Formerly Wellesley Collection. See Williamson, *Ozias Humphry*, p. 249.

By John Jackson, R.A. Oil on canvas, Marquis of Lansdowne, Bowood. Exhib. R.A. 1827 (286). A profile sketch in pencil by Jackson was sent by Wedgwood to Mrs. Flaxman (reproduced *Art Journal*, 1912, p. 83).

By W. Y. Ottley. Pen and ink, profile. British Museum.

By George Romney. (1) Flaxman modelling the bust of

## PORTRAITS OF FLAXMAN

William Hayley, attended by his pupil Thomas Hayley. In the foreground, William Hayley, with Romney behind. Oil on canvas, *c.* 1795. (Greene Sale, Christie's, June 26, 1925.)

(2) A replica or copy of the above, including the heads of Flaxman and Thomas Hayley only. Oil on canvas,  $29 \times 24\frac{1}{2}$  inches. National Portrait Gallery.

(3) Head, described as portrait of Flaxman. (Christie's, January 21, 1927, No. 48.)

By John Thomas Smith. Water-colour drawing, half-length profile. British Museum.

By Mulgrave L. Watson. Seated figure in marble. University College, London.

By Henry Weigall. Medal in bronze, bust, profile left. Inscribed: FLAXMAN. University College, London.

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